

Jung: The Nature and Structure of Personality

Whereas Freud described the structure of personality in terms of three forces that are in conflict—the id, the ego, and the superego—Carl Jung conceived of the structure of personality as a complex network of interacting systems that strive toward eventual harmony. The primary ones are the ego; the personal unconscious with its complexes; and the collective unconscious and its archetypes. Jung also described two primary attitudes toward reality and four basic functions, which together constitute separate but related aspects of the **psyche**, or total personality.

The psyche refers to all psychological processes: thoughts, feelings, sensations, wishes, and so forth. Jung used the terms “psyche” and “psychic,” rather than “mind” and “mental,” to avoid the implications of consciousness in the latter and to emphasize that the psyche embraces both conscious and unconscious processes. Jung and Freud differed in their approaches to the unconscious. Freud tended to view the unconscious essentially as materials that have been repressed, whereas Jung emphasized a concept of the unconscious as the source of consciousness and the matrix of new possibilities of life.

Psychic Energy

Different theorists often use the same words, such as *psyche*, *unconscious*, *libido*, and *ego*, to define processes and characteristics of human beings that they feel are well rendered by the term. These concepts are not interchangeable and must be understood in terms of each theory as a whole.

For Freud, the motive force of personality consists of libido, the sexual drive. Jung also used “libido” to refer to psychic energy, but his use should not be confused with Freud’s definition. Jung used the term in a more generalized fashion as an undifferentiated life energy (1948b). **Libido** is an appetite that may refer to sexuality and to other hungers as well. It reflects itself as striving, desiring, and willing. Psychic energy operates according to the principles of equivalence and entropy; it seeks a balance and moves the person forward in a process of self-realization. Although Jung did not reject an instinctual basis of personality, he criticized Freud’s emphasis on sexuality, suggesting that it is ultimately reductive or simplistic, as it reduces any and all activities to sexual ones. For example, the phallus represents *mana* or power as well as sexuality. Jung believed that sexuality itself must be seen as symbolic, having a mysterious quality of otherness that cannot be fully described.

The Ego

For Freud, the ego is ideally the executor of the personality. Although Freud initially thought that the ego is primarily conscious, he later considered that a large portion of the ego is unconscious and beyond conscious control or awareness.

For Jung, the ego is one’s conscious mind, the part of the psyche that selects perceptions, thoughts, feelings, and memories that may enter consciousness. The ego is responsible for our feelings of identity and continuity. It is through our ego that we establish a sense of stability in the way we perceive ourselves. The ego, however, is not the true center of personality for Jung. This runs counter to our everyday point of view. Most of us identify ourselves or our center as that awareness or consciousness that we have of ourselves, but for Jung, as we shall shortly see, the true center of personality is centered elsewhere.

Psychological Types

One of Jung’s contributions to the psychology of the conscious psyche is his explanation and description of psychological types. Jung distinguished between two basic

attitudes (1933a), and four functions, or ways of perceiving the environment and orienting experiences.

The Attitudes *Extraversion* is an attitude in which the psyche is oriented outward to the objective world. The extravert tends to be more comfortable with the outer world of people and things. *Introversion* is an attitude in which the psyche is oriented inward to the subjective world. The introvert is more comfortable with the inner world of concepts and ideas. These words have become so commonplace in today’s vocabulary that many of us readily identify ourselves as introverted or extraverted. Jung labeled himself an introvert and Freud an extravert. Yet in describing people as introverted or extraverted, Jung dealt primarily with the psychology of consciousness. An individual’s habitual conscious attitude is either introverted or extraverted, but the other attitude is also present, although it may be undeveloped and mostly unconscious.

The Functions Jung’s four functions are grouped into opposite pairs. The functions of *sensation* and *intuition* refer to how we gather data and information. The sensor is more comfortable using the five senses and dealing with facts and reality. The intuitor looks for relationships and meanings or possibilities about past or future events. *Thinking* and *feeling* refer to how we come to conclusions or make judgments. The thinker prefers to use logic and impersonal analysis. The feeler is more concerned with personal values, attitudes, and beliefs. Jung suggested that one of these functions tends to be dominant in each individual and its opposite inferior. The other two functions play an auxiliary role. A professor, for example, may have so cultivated intellectual and cognitive powers that the feeling aspect of personality is submerged. Though primitive and undeveloped, feelings may nevertheless invade the professor’s life in the form of strange moods, symptoms, or projections. The two attitudes and four functions may be combined to form eight psychological types.

The Extraverted Types Four of the types are extraverted. These include

Thinking: Such individuals tend to live according to fixed rules. They repress feelings and try to be objective but are sometimes dogmatic in their thinking.

Feeling: Such individuals are sociable people who seek harmony with the world and respect tradition and authority. They tend to be rather emotional, since thinking is repressed.

Sensing:: Such individuals seek pleasure and enjoy new sensory experiences. They are strongly oriented toward reality and repress intuition.

Intuition : Such individuals are very creative and find new ideas appealing. They tend to make decisions based on hunches rather than facts and are in touch with their unconscious wisdom. Sensation is repressed.

The Introverted Types The other four psychological types are introverted

Thinking:: Such individuals have a strong need for privacy. They tend to be theoretical, intellectual, and somewhat impractical. The individual represses feelings and may have trouble getting along with other people.

Feeling:: Such individuals tend to be quiet, thoughtful, and hypersensitive. Thinking is repressed and the individual may appear mysterious and indifferent to others.

Sensing:: Such individuals tend to be passive, calm, and artistic. They focus on objective sensory events and repress intuition.

Intuition: Jung described himself as an introverted intuitor. Such individuals tend to be mystic dreamers who come up with unusual new ideas and are seldom understood by others. Sensing is repressed.

Jung cautioned that the types as described rarely occur in a pure form. There is a wide range of variation within each type, and people of a specific type may change (though not to another type) as their personal and collective unconscious changes. No one type is better than another type. Each has its own strengths and weaknesses.

The Personal Unconscious

Jung compared the conscious aspect of the psyche to an island that rises from the sea. We notice only the part above water, even though a much greater land mass, the unconscious, lies below (Fordham, 1953). The personal unconscious is a land that is not always covered by sea and thus can be reclaimed. Here reside those perceptions, thoughts, feelings, and memories that have been put aside (for our consciousness can only hold a few items at a time), and they may be easily retrieved. The personal unconscious also includes those experiences of an individual's life history that have been repressed or forgotten. This is an aspect of the unconscious that, as we have seen, Freud also emphasized. These forgotten experiences are accessible to consciousness even though becoming aware of some of them may be an arduous process.

Experiences are grouped in the personal unconscious into clusters, which Jung calls complexes. A **complex** is an organized group of thoughts, feelings, and memories about a particular concept (1934). A complex is said to have a **constellating power**, which means that the complex has the ability to draw new ideas into it and interpret them accordingly. It can be compared to a magnet that attracts related experiences. The more constellating power a complex has, the more powerful it may become. Complexes have important implications for our interpersonal relationships, specifically influencing how we react toward others. A complex may be organized around a particular person or object. One of Jung's examples concerns motherhood (1954). A mother complex refers to the cluster of ideas, feelings, and memories that have arisen from our own particular experience of having been mothered. It also draws into it other experiences of

mothering to which we have been exposed. Each new instance of mothering that we encounter is drawn into our mother complex and understood and interpreted by it. For example, my associations to motherhood pertained first and foremost to my own mother; later, they included other instances of mothering that I may have seen or read about. This concept of mothering deeply and individually affects my understanding and interpretation of what it means to be mothered and to mother.

A complex, however, may make it difficult for us to disengage ourselves from a situation. Jung described a man who believed that he was suffering from a real cancer, even though he knew that his cancer was imaginary. The complex, Jung wrote, is "a spontaneous growth, originating in that part of the psyche which is not identical with consciousness. It appears to be an autonomous development intruding upon consciousness" (1938). A complex may act like an independent person, behaving independently of our conscious self and intentions.

A complex may be conscious, partly conscious, or unconscious. Certain elements of it may extend into the collective unconscious. Some complexes appear to dominate an entire personality. Napoleon is frequently described as being driven by inner forces to obtain power.

The Collective Unconscious

Whereas the personal unconscious is unique for each individual, the **collective unconscious** is shared. Jung referred to the collective unconscious as "transpersonal"; that is to say, it extends across persons. It consists of certain potentialities that we all share because we are human (1936). Many critics believe that Jung made a unique contribution to depth psychology in his concept of the collective unconscious. Freud's concept of unconscious forces was mostly limited to personal experiences that have been repressed or forgotten. Whereas other dissenters from Freud tended to minimize the power of unconscious forces, Jung placed a greater emphasis on them and stressed the qualities that we share with other people.

All people, because they are human beings, have certain things in common. All human beings live in groups and develop some form of family life or society in which roles are assigned to various members. These roles may vary from society to society but they exist in all human groups. All human beings share certain emotions such as joy, grief, or anger. The ways of expressing these emotions may vary, but the emotions themselves are shared. All human beings develop some form of language and symbolization. The particular words may vary, but the concepts and symbols are shared. Thus, certain archetypes and symbols reappear again and again from society to society and they may be seen to have a common meaning.

Jung considered the collective unconscious an empirical concept whose existence can be demonstrated through dreams, mythology, and cross-cultural data. The workings of the collective unconscious are seen in experiences we have all had, such as falling in love with a "perfect other," feeling overwhelmed by a piece of art or music, or being drawn to the sea, and it expresses itself in shared symbols that have universal meaning.

Archetypes Within the collective unconscious lie the archetypes or primordial images. An **archetype** is a universal thought form or predisposition to respond to the world in certain ways (1936). The word "predisposition" is crucial to Jung's concept of the collective unconscious and its archetypes. It emphasizes potentialities, for the archetypes represent different potential ways in which we may express our humanness.

The archetypes can never be fully known or described because they never fully enter consciousness. They appear

to us in personified or symbolized pictorial form and may penetrate into consciousness by means of myths, dreams, art, ritual, and symptoms. It is helpful for us to get in touch with them because they represent the latent potentiality of the psyche. In doing so, we go beyond developing our individual potentialities and become incorporated in the eternal cosmic process.

Jung wrote, "The archetype is a kind of readiness to produce over and over again the same or similar mythical ideas. Hence it seems as though what is impressed upon the unconscious were exclusively the subjective fantasy—ideas aroused by the physical process. We may therefore assume that the archetypes are recurrent impressions made by subjective reasons" (1953)

Persona The **persona** refers to the social role that one assumes in society and one's understanding of it. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the Latin word *persona* refers to the masks that actors wore in ancient Greek plays. Thus, one's persona is the mask that one wears in order to adjust to the demands of society. Each one of us chooses or is assigned particular roles in our society. The persona represents a compromise between one's true identity and social identity. To neglect the development of a persona is to run the risk of becoming asocial. On the other hand, one may identify too completely with the persona at the expense of one's true identity and not permit other aspects of one's personality to develop.

Shadow The **shadow** encompasses those unsocial thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that we potentially possess and other characteristics that we do not accept. It is the opposite side of the persona, in that it refers to those desires and emotions that are incompatible with our social standards and ideal personality. It could be described as the devil within. Jung's choice of the word "shadow" is deliberate and designed to emphasize its necessity. There can be no sun that does not leave a shadow. The shadow cannot be avoided and one is incomplete without it. Jung agreed with Freud that such base and unsocial impulses may be sublimated and channeled to good ends. The shadow can also be projected onto others, with important interpersonal and social consequences such as prejudice. To neglect or try to deny the shadow involves us in hypocrisy and deceit. Angels are not suited for existence on earth. Jung suggested a need to come to know our baser side and recognize our animalistic impulses. To do so adds dimension and credibility to personality as well as increased zest for life.

Anima and Animus Each one of us is assigned a sex gender, male or female, based on our overt sexual characteristics. Yet none of us is purely male or purely female. Each of us has qualities of the opposite sex in terms of biology and also in terms of psychological attitudes and feelings. Thus, the **anima** archetype is the feminine side of the male psyche and the **animus** archetype is the masculine side of the female psyche. One's anima or animus reflects collective and individual human experiences throughout the ages pertaining to one's opposite sex. It assists us in relating to and understanding the opposite sex. For Jung, there was there was a distinct difference between the psychology of men and women. Jung believed that it was important that one express these opposite-sex characteristics in order to avoid an unbalanced or one-sided personality. If one exhibits only the traits of one's assigned sex, the other traits remain unconscious, undeveloped, and primitive. Those of us who have difficulty in understanding the opposite sex probably are not in tune with our anima or animus.

Jung has usually been considered friendly to women because of his assertion of the need to get in touch with

one's opposite-sex archetype. However, his writings have also been criticized for including stereotypes of women as well as potentially racist comments about other groups such as blacks and primitive people.

Jung stoutly maintained that the psyche of women is different from that of men and he tended to be rigid in his discussion of those behaviors that would or would not overstep the boundaries of appropriate expression of one's assigned gender role and one's opposite-sex archetype. He warned of the danger of pushing one's capacity to behave like the opposite sex too far, so that a man loses his masculinity or a woman her femininity.

Jung believed that women's consciousness is characterized by the ability to enter into relationships, whereas men's consciousness is characterized by the ability to engage in rational and analytic thought. The persona, or social mask differs for men and women because of the various roles that society and culture have assigned to them. The anima and the animus function in ways that compensate for the outer personality and show the qualities that are missing in outward conscious expression. In men these are traditionally feminine characteristics, in women masculine ones. The anima and the animus are determined by given biological propensities toward the opposite sex, by collective concept of male and female that have evolved throughout history, and by the experiences that each person has in life with members of the other sex. Because psychological development involves integrating one's persona and one's anima or animus, Jung believed it will progress differently for the male and for the female.

A woman may react to her animus in various ways. Traditionally, women have repressed their masculine qualities and striven to fulfill their feminine role. Jung thought this might lead to an imbalance in the personality and unconscious efforts on the part of the animus to intrude upon the woman's life; he pointed out that both the anima and the animus may behave as if they are laws unto themselves and have disruptive influences. Another way to react to the animus is to identify with it, but this usually makes it more difficult for a woman to fulfill her assigned role.

However, a woman's animus need not be thought of as acting in opposition to femininity. In ideal development, the animus will lead a woman to transform her femininity into a renewed form of consciousness that overcomes the traditional dualities. The same would be true of ideal development in the male.

While Jung's theory may be interpreted as sexist, his comments about the anima and the animus led to the now very popular concept of an androgynous ideal. Androgyny refers to the presence of both masculine and feminine qualities in an individual and the ability to realize both potentialities. Considerable research has been done in the area of androgyny.

Self The central archetype in Jung's understanding is that of the self. Jung's use of the term self differed from the usual use of the term. The **self** represents the striving for unity of all parts of the personality. It is the organizing principle of the psyche that draws unto itself and harmonizes all the archetypes and their expressions. The self directs an orderly allotment of psychic energy so that different parts of the personality are expressed appropriately. Depending upon the occasion and our personal needs, the self allows us to be socially acceptable at work (persona), outrageous at a Halloween party (shadow), emotional at a concert (shadow), and so forth. The self, rather than the ego, is the true midpoint of personality. Thus, the center of one's personality is not to be found in rational ego consciousness. For Jung, the true self lay on the boundary between conscious and

unconscious, reason and unreason. The development of the self is life's goal, but the self archetype cannot begin to emerge until the other personality systems have been fully developed. Thus, it usually does not begin to emerge until one has reached middle age. Jung spoke of the realization of the self as a goal that lies in the future. It is something to be striven for but rarely achieved.

A symbol of the self is the mandala (1955), a concentrically arranged figure such as the circle, the wheel, or the cross, which Jung saw appearing again and again in his patients' dreams and in all the artwork of all cultures. The mandala represents the self striving toward wholeness.

Jung described other archetypes of the collective unconscious: magic, the child, the hero, God, the demon, the earth mother, and the wise old man. The point is that one cannot deny or destroy these archetypes. If one tries to (for example, if one says that God is dead), the archetype will reappear in an unlikely place because the archetypes cannot be destroyed. God will simply change into something else that will evoke human worship. Therefore, it is helpful for us to get in touch with the archetypes, as they represent our latent and inevitable personality.

At the deepest levels, Jung believed that our unconscious remains archaic, despite our scientific technology and the development of our rational powers. Freud disclaimed Jung's plea for originality in articulating the collective unconscious, stating that he (Freud) had known all along that the unconscious is collective. And, of course, there are certain archetypal patterns in Freud's understanding of the unconscious. The psychosexual stages involve predispositions toward acting out the human drama in certain ways. The Oedipal situation that we experience is a collective archetypal myth. Symbols in dreams may be unique to the individual, but also shared. Thus, a concept of collected unconscious forces is implied in Freud's theory although certainly not clearly articulated. And whereas Freud emphasized the unique unfolding of unconscious forces in the individual's life history and personal unconscious (it is not enough to know that one has gone through the Oedipal situation—one must fully experience its particular unfolding within one's distinct family constellation), Jung emphasized the shared and collective aspects. As you might imagine, Jung's concept is an important and controversial one in personality theorizing.

Self-Realization

Jung suggests that the self is in the process of **self-realization**. He did not outline stages in the development of personality nor did he consider the early childhood years to be the most important ones, as Freud did. The "psychic birth" of an individual does not really occur until adolescence, when the psyche starts to show a definite form and content. Personality development continues throughout life, and the middle years (35 to 40) mark the beginning of major changes.

Although the concept of self-realization was fully described by Jung, it cannot be said to be new with his thought. The origin of the principle takes us back to the Greek philosopher Aristotle (384-322 B.C.). Aristotle held that everything has a *telos*, a purpose or goal, that constitutes its essence and indicates its potentiality. Thus, every acorn has the essence of treeness and the potential to become a mighty oak. In the same way, each one of us has the potential to develop into a self, that is, to realize, fulfill, and enhance our maximum human potentialities. This viewpoint is essentially teleological, or purposeful. It explains the present in terms of the future with reference to a goal that guides and directs our destiny. Whereas

Freud's view was primarily a causal one, comprehending personality in terms of antecedent conditions of the past, Jung maintained that both causality and teleology are necessary for a full understanding of personality.

While development is largely forward moving, regression may occur under conditions of frustration. Jung did not view such regression negatively. Rather, it may, in the end, facilitate the forward movement of progression. By exploring the unconscious, both personal and collective, the ego may learn from past experiences and resolve the problem that led to the regression. Whereas for Freud a neurosis represents the return of the repressed, for Jung it is the insistence of the undeveloped part of the personality on being heard and realized.

Self-realization involves individuation and transcendence (1916, 1939) **Individuation**, the systems of the individual psyche achieve their fullest degree of differentiation, expression, and development. **Transcendence** refers to integration of the diverse systems of the self toward the goal of wholeness and identity with all of humanity. Jung's concepts of individuation and transcendence are difficult for the average Westerner to understand. In Western psychology, we generally think of personality in terms of an individual's uniqueness. We suggest that personality is what makes one individual different from all other people. People who do not appear to be unique are often said to "lack personality."

For Jung, individuation does not mean individualism in that narrow sense, but rather fulfilling one's own specific nature and realizing one's uniqueness in one's place within the whole. In the process of transcendence, a deeper self or essence emerges to unite a person with all of humanity and the universe at large. Individuation and transcendence are both ongoing processes. However, the first half of life is often more concerned with individuation, the cultivation of consciousness and gender-specific behavior, while the second half of life may be more concerned with transcendence, coming into closer contact with self and expressing our collective unconscious and oneness with humanity as a whole.

Thus, as the self realizes, a stormy process that may never be fully completed, it perpetually rises to a greater enhancement and realization of itself and humanity. If we view the psyche as a wheel, the hub of which is the archetype of the self, we can suggest that the true self emerges when the opposites coincide. The true person does not consist of the conscious or the unconscious, mind or body, persona or shadow, overt sexual characteristics or complements, but of all of these. Neurosis results from a one-sided personality development. The coincidence of opposites is the ultimate goal of personality development in the Jungian view. Although Freud and Jung emphasized the dynamic opposition of portions of the personality, they differed in the implications of this conflict. For Freud, the person is inescapably in conflict; for Jung, the person ultimately seeks harmony.

—*Personality Theories: An Introduction*
Barbara Engler (Houghton, Mifflin Co.)