

Jungian Concepts

Individuation

Individuation is the lifelong process of becoming an integrated and authentic individual. It is becoming who you truly are by integrating all aspects of yourself. It is not about becoming more individualistic or selfish, it's about achieving wholeness and self-realisation. Individuation is becoming a whole, unique and authentic person. In the first half of life, individuation is characterised by ego formation and developing our identity. In the second half of life, individuation becomes a process of integrating the conscious and unconscious aspects of the personality to realise our greater self and achieve wholeness.

Archetypes

Archetypes are inherited elements of the psyche which are common to everyone. Archetypes include the ego, persona, shadow, anima, animus, great man, great woman, child and the Self.

Ego

The ego is a conscious thinking subject and the organising centre of consciousness. It gives you a sense of I-ness or personal identity. The ego helps you to recognise yourself as a separate individual and maintain a coherent identity over time. It is responsible for executive functioning which enables us to prioritise and execute our conscious activities, problem solve, make decisions and regulate our emotions.

Persona

The persona is the mask we present to the world and the social identity we developed through the process of socialisation, genderisation and role modelling to achieve acceptance and adaptation. We adapt ourselves to survive in our family of origin, to be accepted by our peers and to achieve success in our careers. The persona is formed around the accepted norms and values of our family, culture and environment and is characterised by the socially acceptable and adaptive aspects of our innate personality. The persona is the social mask we wear to function in society. A common persona is our working or professional identity. Individuation requires recognising that the persona is not the whole self.

Shadow

The shadow is the unconscious part of the personality containing repressed traits, desires and instincts deemed unacceptable by the ego through social conditioning. It includes undesirable qualities like aggression, sensitivity, jealousy and shameful desires. However, the shadow can also contain positive qualities and undeveloped potential which are unconscious and unacknowledged, such as creativity, intelligence or attractiveness. The shadow is commonly personified in dreams by persons of the same sex as the dreamer and can be positive or negative. The repressed undesirable aspects of ourselves deemed to be unsuitable by our ego will appear as a negative shadow in dreams. Conversely, if the contents are deemed to be good or prized by our ego the shadow will appear positively, presenting us with treasures – aspects of ourselves that have been unrecognised or undervalued which also lie hidden in our shadow. Integrating the shadow is crucial for psychological wholeness and maturity.

Anima and Animus

The anima is the feminine side of a person and tends to be unconscious in men. The animus is the masculine side of a person and tends to be unconscious in women. The anima appears as a female figure in dreams and the animus appears as a male figure in dreams. However, this

doesn't take diversity into account. The personality type of a person, their sexuality and social conditioning will also determine the dominance of the anima or animus in their personality and how they appear to them in dreams.

Great Man and Great Woman

The Great Man and Great Woman represent our unconscious mind: our intuition and our inner wisdom. The Great Man is a sublime patriarchal figure who is benevolent, wise, held in high esteem and represents our inner guru. The Great Woman is a sublime matriarchal figure who represents unconditional love and feminine wisdom.

Child

The child represents our essential nature. We are each a pure and innocent child of the universe. Our actions reflect our conditioning and experiences but our essential nature never changes. The androgynous child is a symbol of wholeness representing the integrated human personality.

Self

The Self is the organising principle of the psyche and is the orchestrator of our individuation. It is the centre of the unconscious and is our transcendental essence. The Self can appear as a circle, sphere, the sun, energy, fire, light, the sky, water, a sacred object, a holy figure or something with a numinous quality etc.

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