

The Nature of the Psyche according to C.G. Jung

Based on a presentation given to the Jung Society on 7th February 2019 by

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C.G. Jung

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The Nature of the Psyche according to CG Jung



C.G. Jung

1875-1961

A Swiss psychiatrist and writer who developed a psychology he eventually called Analytical Psychology. He began his life as a doctor in the renowned Burghölzli Clinic in Zurich working with patients with mental illnesses such as schizophrenia – or dementia praecox as it was called in those days.

Jung developed Analytical psychology based on his own observations of his patients and their dreams and on his own scholarship. He found inspiration in ancient religions, ancient Greek philosophy, Alchemy, Gnosticism and Eastern philosophies. He was a prolific writer and his theories are found in his lectures, essays and letters published in the 20 volumes of his collected works and in his letters and other additional publications.

Although Jung shared with Freud a recognition of the role of the unconscious and initially supported and promoted Freud's psychoanalytic theories, he gradually distinguished himself from Freud in the way he conceptualised the nature of the psyche – particularly when he introduced the idea of the Collective Unconscious to explain the common motifs he had observed in his patients dreams. Another way in which he differed from Freud was in his view of libido as psychic energy, not limited to sexual energy.

To distinguish his psychology from Freud's, he called it Analytical Psychology.

Jungian scholars and practitioners spend decades studying and commenting on Jung's works. Those who come after him – often referred to as Post-Jungians – have modified and expanded on his ideas, but here I am sticking to Jung's original ideas.

Aim of this talk

My intention in this talk is to present as simply as possible an outline of Jung's conception of the psyche. By doing this I am taking the risk of over-simplifying and leaving out the complexity of Jung's thought. What I am presenting really is the frame of the house, or perhaps the floor plan. Our Society's other talks take up particular aspects of Jungian thought. Jung developed his thought over a long lifetime. Jungian scholars pore over his voluminous writings in the manner of philosophers or theologians! What exactly did he mean when he said X? Are the archetypes innate or out in the world? Would they exist without us?

I do not plan to enter into any of these arguments this evening.

I do want to start by stressing the "as if" nature of Jung's psychology. His observations and researches led him to postulate that the psyche must be structured in this way.

What do we mean by PSYCHE?

Psyche is not the brain. Psyche is more than mind. Psyche is Jung's word for the totality of all psychic processes, both conscious and unconscious. It is the word he uses for the subject matter of analytical psychology.

The psyche is far from being a homogenous unit--on the contrary, it is a boiling cauldron of contradictory impulses, inhibitions, and affects ["Psychological Aspects of the Mother Archetype," CW 9i, par. 190.]

He acknowledges that the study of the psyche is complicated by the fact that it means that the psyche is studying itself. There is no external point from which humanity can stand to study psyche.

With the development of neuroscience have come some attempts to find a place in the brain for the elements of the psyche proposed by Jung. Initially Jung said he did not think this was possible. (On psychic energy, 1928). While he always claimed that his work was

scientific and empirical based on observation, it belongs as much to the realm of the imagination.

There are however contemporary Jungian scholars who believe that Jung's psychology can and should be validated through linking it to neuroscience. The concepts of Left brain and Right brain, for instance, would correspond with directed thinking and fantasy thinking or consciousness and the borderlands of the unconscious. And Jung himself is reported to have speculated that the unconscious processes are located in the lower centres of the brain and that archetypes could be located in the brain stem. (PB p. 52) However, we don't have time to explore this tonight.

Soul

While Jung often used the word soul in its traditional theological sense, he strictly limited its psychological meaning.

I have been compelled, in my investigations into the structure of the unconscious, to make a conceptual distinction between soul and psyche. By psyche I understand the totality of all psychic processes, conscious as well as unconscious. By soul, on the other hand, I understand a clearly demarcated functional complex that can best be described as a "personality." [Definitions," CW 6, par. 797] i.e. an inner personality (ADL)

Through his study of alchemy he came to understand soul for a man as having a feminine character and for a woman a masculine character.

Soul-image

The soul is represented in dreams or other products of the unconscious as a soul-image, a sort of inner personality, usually contrasexual.

Wherever an impassioned, almost magical, relationship exists between the sexes, it is invariably a question of a projected soul-image. [Definitions," CW 6, par. 809.]

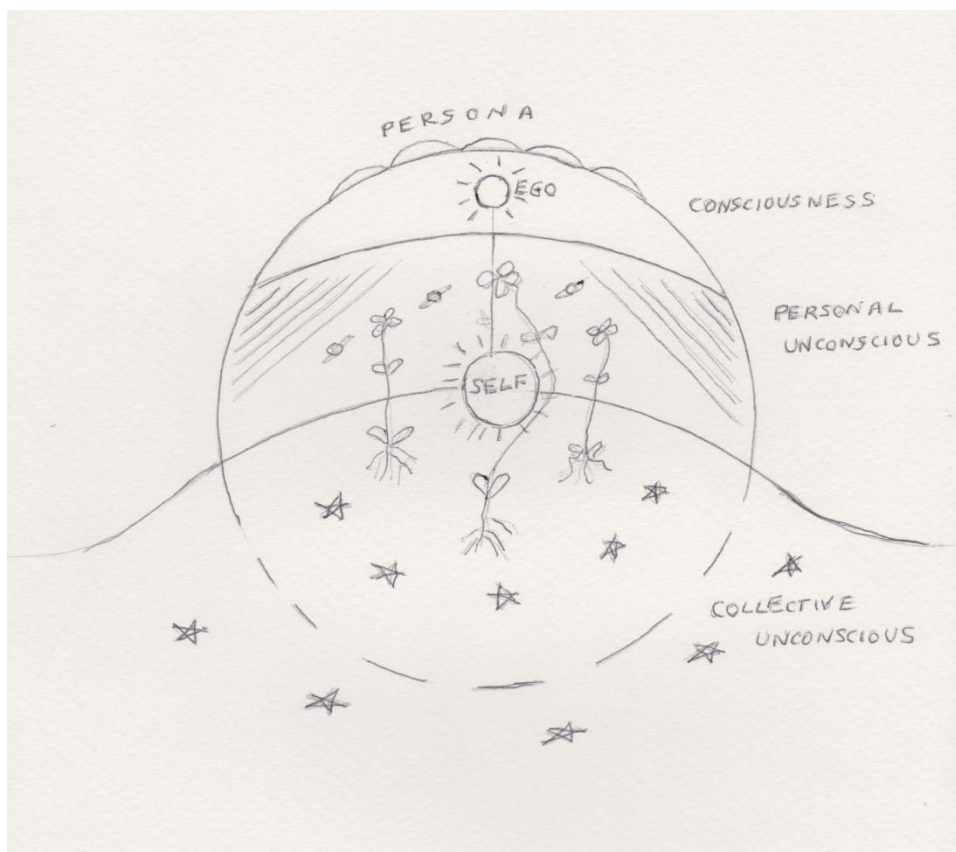
The soul-image is a specific archetypal image produced by the unconscious, commonly experienced in projection onto a person of the opposite sex.

For an idealistic woman, a depraved man is often the bearer of the soul-image. The same thing happens with men, when the prostitute is surrounded with the halo of a soul crying for succour.[CW 6., par. 811.]

Jung personified his own soul in “The Red Book”; and the concept of caring for the soul is the focus of some modern schools of Jungian thinking.

A diagram to help us understand Jung’s idea of the structure of the psyche

Jung did not systematise his psychology. There have been attempts to impose some order on his ideas by coming up with diagrams. This is my attempt.



The diagram is an attempt to provide an image for our understanding. As Jung said “Psyche is image”. In dreams the psyche might appear as a symbolic image, such as a house with many floors. In Jung’s autobiographical work “Memories, Dreams, Reflections”, he describes a dream in which he explores a house with a pre-historic sub-basement.

I am now going to describe the parts of the psyche that we see in the diagram, as well as some of the psychic processes proposed by Jung and I will give examples of their practical application.

Definition of Consciousness and the Unconscious

Consciousness is that of which we are aware – or more precisely that of which the central command – the EGO – is aware. It is what we know of ourselves. And it has a face which it turns to the world – the PERSONA.

We become conscious of something, says Jung, either through a flash of insight – the “aha!” moment – or when, in a state of contemplation, ideas pass before the mind like dream images and connections arise between them.

Consciousness does not create itself - it wells up from unknown depths. In childhood it awakens gradually, and all through life it wakes each morning out of the depths of sleep from an unconscious condition. It is like a child that is born daily out of the primordial womb of the unconscious. . . . It is not only influenced by the unconscious but continually emerges out of it in the form of numberless spontaneous ideas and sudden flashes of thought.["The Psychology of Eastern Meditation" [CW 11, par. 935.]

The Unconscious is a concept that covers all psychic contents or processes that are not conscious.

Conscious and unconscious have no clear demarcations. (8:397)

Elements associated with Consciousness – Ego / Persona / Psychological type

Ego.

Ego is the centre of consciousness. It directs our conscious waking lives. We cannot function without it. It is said to be a feeling toned complex in that it comes into being via our felt experience in the world and with which our feeling of identity is tied up.

It develops as we mature into fully functioning adults. In the process of individuation, as we integrate and make conscious the contents of the unconscious, it loses its central position

and makes way for the Self. However, the Ego should never be de-throned in favour of the Unconscious.

Persona

The face – usually ideal aspects of ourselves – that we present to the outside world. The mistake is to identify with our personas.

The persona is that which in reality one is not, but which oneself as well as others think one is. ["Concerning Rebirth," CW 9i, par. 221.]

The persona is . . . a functional complex that comes into existence for reasons of adaptation or personal convenience. [CW 6, par. 801.]

Originally the word persona meant a mask worn by actors to indicate the role they played.

On this level, it is both a protective covering and an asset in mixing with other people.

Civilized society depends on interactions between people through the persona. ["Anima and Animus," CW 7, par. 318.]

Jung even sneers a bit at people with a poorly developed persona.

Psychological type

Jung's theory of the different ways that the ego functions and relates to the world. The four functions (Thinking, Feeling, Sensation and Intuition) provide a basic orientation for the ego. It also has an unconscious aspect in the sense that one's least developed function is relegated to the unconscious.

These days we tend to meet Jung's theory of psychological types through the Myers-Briggs Personality type indicator (MBTI). Katherine Briggs and later her daughter Isabel Briggs-Myers based the MBTI on Jung's work on typology, but ideally, for our purposes, it would be good to go back to Jung's original sources (found in volume 6 of his Collected Works [CW6]), before they found their way into psychological testing and questionnaires.

The Unconscious

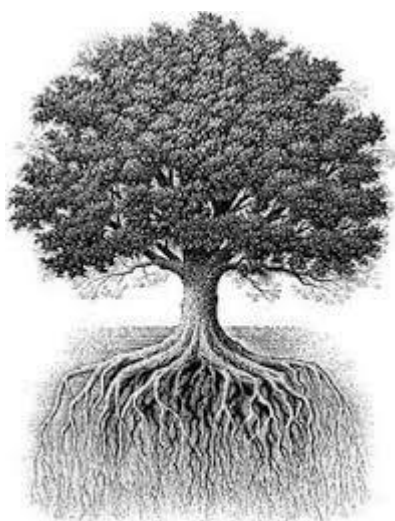
A concept that covers all psychic contents or processes that are not conscious, i.e. not related to the ego in any perceptible way.

My justification for speaking of the existence of unconscious processes at all is derived simply and solely from experience. [Definitions," CW 6, par. 837.]

*The unconscious is the receptacle of all lost memories and of all contents that are still too weak to become conscious... Besides these we must include all more or less intentional repression of painful thoughts and feelings. I call the sum of all these contents the "personal unconscious". But over and above that we also find in the unconscious qualities that are not individually acquired but are inherited, e.g. **instincts** to carry out actions from necessity... In this deeper stratum we also find the a priori inborn forms of "intuition", namely the **archetypes** of perception and apprehension, which are **the necessary a priori determinants of all psychic processes**. [CW8 para 270]*

This was written in 1919 and was the first time he used the term archetypes. Before then he used the term "primordial image". Jung went on to say a great deal more to try to explain archetypes over his lifetime.

Contents of the personal unconscious have their roots in the collective unconscious in that these contents form around a nucleus of archetypal ideas.



Tree and roots (Wikipedia Commons)

A good image for this idea is the tree with its roots deep in the soil drawing up nourishment for the tree. We can speak of the parts of the psyche as separate but they are inseparable.

The contents of the unconscious are said to be **compensatory** in that they offer a correction to the conscious attitude.

In general, the compensating attitude of the unconscious works to maintain psychic equilibrium.

The unconscious processes that compensate the conscious ego contain all those elements that are necessary for the self-regulation of the psyche as a whole. On the personal level, these are the not consciously recognized personal motives which appear in dreams, or the meanings of daily situations which we have overlooked, or conclusions we have failed to draw, or affects we have not permitted, or criticisms we have spared ourselves. ["The Function of the Unconscious," CW 7, par. 275.]

Messages from the unconscious come to us via our **Dreams**. We see the compensatory aspect of dreams when, for instance, someone whom in waking life we hold in high esteem appears in a dream as a scoundrel. Or vice versa.

For this reason Jung worked mainly with his patient's dreams and wrote a lot about dreams and their symbolism.

He called dreams *A spontaneous self-portrayal, in symbolic form, of the actual situation in the unconscious.* (CW8, para 505) - an emissary of the unconscious. Just like all products of the unconscious, dreams are compensatory in nature, i.e. they contribute to the self-regulation of the psyche by presenting a point of view opposite to that of the ego.

The messages from the unconscious, of course, must always be mediated by the ego.

Personal Unconscious

Comprises unconscious contents that are particular to the individual personality as distinct from the collective unconscious. The contents are acquired during the individual's lifetime.

The unconscious is both vast and inexhaustible. It is not simply the unknown or the repository of conscious thoughts and emotions that have been repressed, but includes contents that may or will become conscious.

So defined, the unconscious depicts an extremely fluid state of affairs.

It contains: *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 that are taking shape in me and will sometime come to consciousness: all this is the content of the unconscious.* [*"On the Nature of the Psyche," CW 8, par. 382.*]

In the above paragraph it is understood he is referring to the personal unconscious.

Associated with the personal unconscious are:

The Shadow

Feeling toned Complexes

Anima and animus

Shadow

The Shadow contains that which we do not wish to be, and which we therefore repress. It can hide both our dark side and our "light" There are sometimes reasons why we don't want to let our creative impulse – our light - shine and therefore repress it e.g. to keep safe from the disapproval or envy of a parent. The dark side of course is all those things about ourselves that don't fit in with our persona - our image of who we think we are: good, kind, helpful, whatever – such as destroying people's reputations with gossip, jostling for power, being egotistical, papering over the cracks, and other not so nice things. Because we don't want to see these things in ourselves, we tend to project them on to others.

We have probably all heard of the philosopher Bertrand Russell's saying "I am firm, you are obstinate, he is a pig-headed fool."

Jung says that the Shadow is an archetype.

Before unconscious contents have been differentiated, the shadow is in effect the whole of the unconscious. (Jung)

Everyone has a shadow. As individuals we each have a shadow and organisations also have shadows. The brighter the light the darker the shadow. The more we want to present ourselves as good and well meaning, respectable, worthy, dignified, the darker the shadow. A topical example is sexual abuse in religious institutions. The more these institutions present themselves as pure and above reproach – as a spiritual authority - , the darker their shadow, which manifests itself in, for example, abuse of the vulnerable who place their trust in them. The concept of Shadow is a lens through which to view the Churches' failure to deal with abuse by some members of the clergy.

The shadow is a moral problem that challenges the whole ego-personality, for no one can become conscious of the shadow without considerable moral effort. To become conscious of it involves recognizing the dark aspects of the personality as present and real. ["The Shadow," CW 9ii, par. 14.]

The first task in making unconscious contents conscious is to work on one's Shadow. This often comes out in our personal relations through **projection**. If you find yourself having a strong aversion to another person, it might be for a good reason, or it might be because that person represents something in your shadow that you really don't wish to own.

Another way to work on the Shadow is to work on our dreams. Shadow figures appear in dreams as persons of the same sex.

Feeling-toned Complexes



Fireworks. Wikipedia Commons

We have probably all heard of complexes. Perhaps you didn't know though that this is a word coined by Jung himself when he was carrying out his Word Association experiment. He defined the complex, or feeling-toned complex, as an emotionally charged group of ideas or images. In the word association test, the patient was asked to respond to a list of words. When there were hesitations on the part of the patient in producing an association to a particular word, it was invariably found to be associated with a conflict or distressing situation.

Complexes are "feeling-toned ideas" that over the years accumulate around certain archetypes, for instance "mother" and "father." When complexes are constellated, they are invariably accompanied by affect. They are always relatively autonomous.

Complexes interfere with the intentions of the will and disturb the conscious performance; they produce disturbances of memory and blockages in the flow of associations; they appear and disappear according to their own laws; they can temporarily obsess consciousness, or influence speech and action in an unconscious way. In a word, complexes behave like independent beings. [Psychological Factors in Human Behaviour," CW 8., par. 253.]

Complexes are in fact "splinter psyches."

Everyone knows nowadays that people "have complexes." What is not so well known, though far more important theoretically, is that complexes can have us. [CW 8., par. 200.]

One way of knowing when a complex has us is to catch oneself in an emotional state thinking "I don't know why I did that. That's not me!"

Example: Mother complex

Complexes have their roots in the archetypes of the collective unconscious. For example, we have all heard of the mother complex:

At the core of any mother complex is the mother archetype, which means that behind emotional associations with the personal mother, both in men and in women, there is a collective image of nourishment and security on the one hand (the positive mother), and devouring possessiveness on the other (the negative mother).

In practical terms, the nature of one's own mother complex will be an unconscious screen through which one relates to women. Do you act towards her as if she is there to look after you (good mother) or are you afraid she is going to devour you (bad mother)?

Anima / animus

Jung proposed this concept, he says, from observation of his patients. He used the term anima to denote an inner feminine image in the man's unconscious relating to soul and Eros; and correspondingly he used the term animus to denote an inner masculine image in the woman's unconscious, relating to mind or spirit.

Jung saw these as inner soul images with both positive and negative aspects. Positive effects are felt when we fall in love. Negative aspects occur when one becomes possessed by them. They straddle the personal unconscious and the collective unconscious in that they are archetypes that strongly influence each individual.

Anima



Dante Gabriel Rossetti – Beatrice (Wikipedia Commons)

The anima is both a personal complex and an archetypal image of woman in the male psyche. It is an unconscious factor incarnated anew in every male child, and is responsible for the mechanism of projection. Initially identified with the personal mother, the anima is later experienced not only in other women but as a pervasive influence in a man's life.

The anima is the archetype of life itself. ["Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious," CW 9i, par. 66.]

The anima is strongly associated with the Soul Image, as I mentioned earlier.

Animus



Apollo of the Belvedere (Wikipedia Commons)

The inner masculine side of a woman.

Like the anima in a man, the animus is both a personal complex and an archetypal image.

Woman is compensated by a masculine element and therefore her unconscious has, so to speak, a masculine imprint. This results in a considerable psychological difference between men and women, and accordingly I have called the projection-making factor in women the animus, which means mind or spirit. The animus corresponds to the paternal Logos just as

the anima corresponds to the maternal Eros.[The Syzygy: Anima and Animus, CW 9ii, pars. 28f.]

In both cases the contrasexual element compensates for the conscious attitude.

Jung has a lot to say about the anima, as he tried to come to terms with his own. However, some of what he has to say about the animus – particularly animus possession, when a woman becomes opinionated, bossy and domineering - sounds unsatisfactory to the more assertive and less submissive modern woman. (However anima possession doesn't sound very flattering for a man either – restlessness, moodiness, promiscuity...)

Coming to terms with the anima or animus is a lifetime's work. We only know the nature of our inner contrasexual selves through projection. The primary projection will be onto the mother or father, but the most energy-consuming projections will be onto our partners. In any relationship there are four people – the woman's ego and her animus and the man's ego and his anima. These figures are responsible for all of the intimate relationship conflicts playing out across the world every day.

(For those wondering about the anima in same sex relationships: in Robert Hopcke's book "Jung, Jungians and Homosexuality" it is suggested that the anima is possibly androgynous.)

Collective unconscious

Jung referred to the collective unconscious as forming a sub-stratum of the psyche. *This is no more than a hypothesis, but we are driven to it by the empirical material.* (CW 9ii – Aion para 12).

The instincts and the archetypes together form the "collective unconscious". (CW8:270). One way to distinguish between instincts and archetypes is to see the instincts as responsible for actions of a universal nature and the archetypes as responsible for the patterning in the universal way humans perceive and understand things.

Archetypes

Jung proposed the concept of archetypes to explain the common motifs in his patients' dreams and in myths and folk tales from around the world. Jung said many things about

Archetypes over his life time. As I mentioned before, he began by calling them Primordial Images.

They are not inherited ideas but inherited possibilities of ideas ... common to all, as can be seen from [their] universal occurrence.["Concerning the Archetypes and the Anima Concept," CW 9i, par. 136.]

In themselves they are not capable of being made conscious but their effects are discernible in archetypal images.

Archetypes manifest both on a personal level, through complexes, and collectively, as characteristics of whole cultures.

On a personal level, archetypal motifs are patterns of thought or behaviour that are common to humanity at all times and in all places.

For years I have been observing and investigating the products of the unconscious in the widest sense of the word, namely dreams, fantasies, visions, and delusions of the insane. I have not been able to avoid recognizing certain regularities, that is, types. There are types of situations and types of figures that repeat themselves frequently and have a corresponding meaning. I therefore employ the term "motif" to designate these repetitions. Thus there are not only typical dreams but typical motifs in dreams. . . .

In one of his essays, Jung named the chief archetypes as *the shadow, the wise old man, the child(including the child hero), the mother ("Primordial Mother" and "Earth mother") ... and her counterpart the maiden, and lastly the anima in man and the animus in woman.*["The Psychological Aspects of the Kore," CW9i, par. 309.]

However, theoretically there is no limit to the number of archetypes. Others common ones include the Self, the trickster, the hero and the wounded healer.

Towards the end of his life Jung, through his interest in Quantum Physics and his collaboration with the physicist Wolfgang Pauli, speculated that the archetype of number was the core archetype and was the meeting place of psyche and matter, i.e. that the archetypes are to psyche what the laws of nature are to matter and they can all be expressed through number. Jung's close colleague Marie-Louis von Franz tried to carry on

Jung's work in this area in her book "Number and Time", but she regarded her attempt as unsatisfactory.

Archetypal images



Mother goddess and child (Wikimedia Commons)

We cannot "see" the archetypes. We only know them through archetypal images - the form or representation of an archetype in consciousness. What moves an artist to sculpt or paint the images of a mother and child? Or a writer or film-maker to describe the journey of the hero? They are moved by the corresponding archetypes.

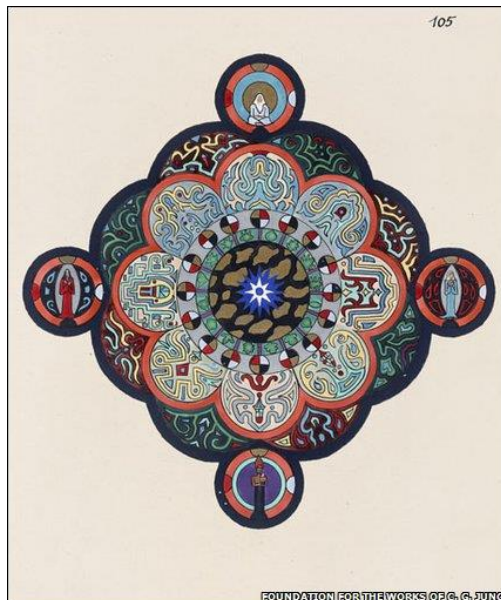
Archetypal images tend to fascinate the psyche and to be experienced as numinous. An experience of numinosity gives us the sense of being in contact with a force larger than ourselves, a force that alters consciousness.

[The archetype is] a dynamism which makes itself felt in the numinosity and fascinating power of the archetypal image. ["On the Nature of the Psyche," CW 8, par. 414.]

Archetypal images, as universal patterns or motifs which come from the collective unconscious, are the basic content of religions, mythologies, legends and fairy tales.

An archetypal content expresses itself, first and foremost, in metaphors. ["The Psychology of the Child Archetype," CW 9i, par. 267]

The Self



A Mandala from Jung's "Red Book"

The self is an archetypal image representing **wholeness**. It is the regulating centre of the whole psyche – both conscious and unconscious; a transpersonal power that transcends the ego. Just as the ego is the centre of consciousness, the self is the centre of combined consciousness and the unconscious. Jung has said it is both the centre and circumference of the psyche. It is often symbolised by a mandala and also by the Philosopher's stone sought by the alchemists.

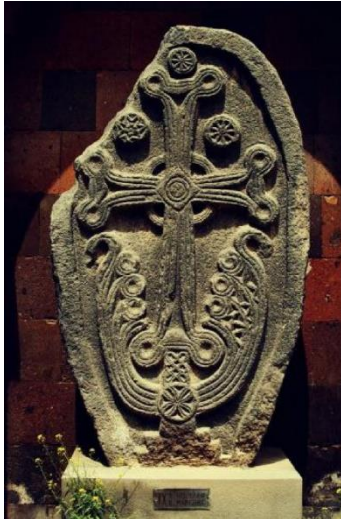
This sense of wholeness – of being in contact with the Self - has a numinous character.

As an archetypal image, the self can appear in dreams as a figure offering a sense of the numinous. It could be any image – natural or human. A circular image in a dream can be interpreted as a symbol of the Self.

The relation between ego and self (the communication from the self being translated and mediated by the moral and reasoning powers of the ego) is called **the ego-self axis**.

Now we have been through the main elements of the psyche – conscious and unconscious. Here are some other concepts included in Jung's understanding of the psyche.

Symbol



Armenian cross (Wikipedia Commons)

Jung distinguished between a symbol and a sign. For example, a cross sewn on your sleeve to show you are doing humanitarian work for the Red Cross is a sign. On the other hand, a cross can arise out of the unconscious as a symbol for an as yet unknown psychological fact that cannot be adequately explained with words.

... an interpretation of the cross is symbolic when it puts the cross beyond all conceivable explanations, regarding it as expressing an as yet unknown and incomprehensible fact of a mystical or transcendent, i.e., psychological, nature, which simply finds itself most appropriately represented in the cross.[CW 6., par. 815.]

Opposites – Union of opposites - Transcendent function - Enantiodromia

When Jung talks about Opposites he is referring to the ego and the unconscious.

There is no form of human tragedy that does not in some measure proceed from [the] conflict between the ego and the unconscious. ["Analytical Psychology and Weltanschauung," CW 8, par. 706.]

The conflict of the opposites can be symbolised, for instance, by the cross.

The ego keeps its integrity only if it does not identify with one or other of the opposites. (CW 8, p. 219)

If one makes conscious the aspect of the unconscious causing the conflict and holds the tension between the conscious attitude and the message from the unconscious, without giving precedence to one or the other, a third thing comes about. Something that one could not predict. **A union of opposites.**



Woodcut from the 16th century alchemical treatise *Rosarium Philosophorum*

This is facilitated by what Jung calls the **Transcendent function**. It offers a uniting symbol which transcends both sides of the conflict. It is part of the psyche's ability to self-regulate.

In neurological terms one could speculate that the union of opposites comes about with the creation of new neural pathways in the brain.

Also in the context of opposites Jung used the term **Enantiodromia** (as defined by Jung in his *Collected Works*, Vol 6 (*Psychological Types*), para 708-709)

It comes from the ancient Greek meaning "*running counter to*". *In the philosophy of Heraclitus it is used to designate the play of opposites in the course of events – the view that everything that exists turns into its opposite.*

From the living comes death, and from the dead life..... Construction and destruction, destruction and construction – this is the principle that governs all the cycles of natural life....

Jung used the term to mean the emergence of the unconscious “opposite” in the course of time. This characteristic phenomenon practically always occurs when an extreme, one-sided tendency dominates conscious life; in time an equally powerful counterposition is built up ... e.g. the conversion of St Paul....

Individuation



Caspar David Friedrich – The Wanderer

A process of psychological differentiation, having for its goal the development of the individual personality.

In general, it is the process by which individual beings are formed and differentiated; in particular, it is the development of the psychological individual as a being distinct from the general, collective psychology.[CW 6, par. 757.]

Individuation is a process informed by the archetypal ideal of wholeness, which in turn depends on a vital relationship between ego and unconscious. The aim is not to overcome one's personal psychology, to become perfect, but to become familiar with it. Thus individuation involves an increasing awareness of one's unique psychological reality,

including personal strengths and limitations, and at the same time a deeper appreciation of humanity in general.

Individuation depends on the development of consciousness, or the integration of unconscious contents.

As the individual is not just a single, separate being, but by his very existence presupposes a collective relationship, it follows that the process of individuation must lead to more intense and broader collective relationships and not to isolation. [Definitions," CW 6, par. 758.]

Individuation does not shut one out from the world, but gathers the world to itself. ["On the Nature of the Psyche," CW 8, par. 432.]

The Religious attitude



J.M.W. Turner. Buttermere Lake

Religious attitude. Psychologically, an attitude informed by the careful observation of, and respect for, invisible forces and personal experience.

We might say . . . that the term "religion" designates the attitude peculiar to a consciousness which has been changed by experience of the numinosum. ["Psychology and Religion" CW 11, par. 9.]

The religious attitude is quite different from faith associated with a specific creed. The latter, as a codified and dogmatized form of an original religious experience, simply gives expression to a particular collective belief. True religion involves a subjective relationship to certain metaphysical, extramundane factors.

Synchronicity

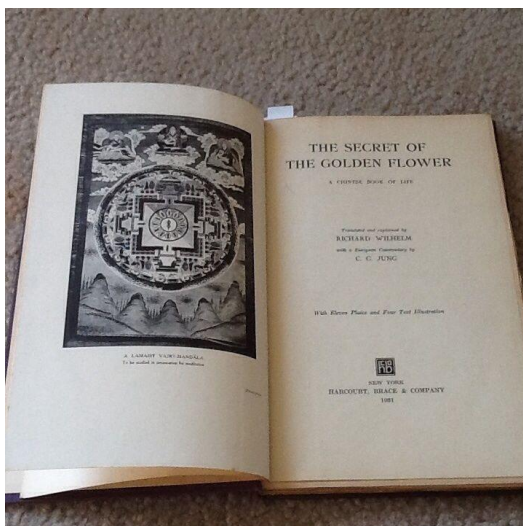
I would say that awareness of the mysteries of synchronicity comes under the heading of a religious attitude in the Jungian sense.

Synchronicity is a term coined by Jung to describe those moments when an inner psychological state coincides with an outer event, without there being any cause. We have probably all experience these moments, for example we are thinking about someone that we haven't heard from for years and then we receive a letter from them or we hear they have died, or whatever.

Synchronicity was defined by Jung as an "acausal connecting principle," an essentially mysterious connection between the personal psyche and the material world, based on the fact that at bottom they are only different forms of energy.

It is not only possible but fairly probable, even, that psyche and matter are two different aspects of one and the same thing. The synchronicity phenomena point, it seems to me, in this direction, for they show that the nonpsychic can behave like the psychic, and vice versa, without there being any causal connection between them.[CW 8., par. 418.]

Final Word from Jung's Commentary on The Secret of the Golden Flower



(*The Secret of the Golden Flower* is a Chinese text, possibly 17th century, on the subject of meditation. Jung wrote a psychological commentary on it for his friend Richard Wilhelm's translation.)

"By understanding the unconscious, we free ourselves from its domination. This is really also the purpose of the instructions in our text. The pupil is taught to concentrate on the light of the innermost region and, while doing so, to free himself from all outer and inner entanglements. His life-impulse is guided towards a consciousness without content which none the less permits all contents to exist. [The text] pictures a psychic state which perhaps can best be characterized as a detachment of consciousness from the world, and a withdrawal of it to [a point outside the world], so to speak. ...The fullness of the world which heretofore pressed upon consciousness has lost none of its richness and beauty, but it no longer dominates consciousness... The unconscious is no longer projected, and so the primal participation mystique (i.e. unconscious projection) with things is abolished." (Commentary on the Secret of the Golden Flower, p. 122-3)

Jung continues: *"Naturally, civilised man regards himself as immeasurably above these things [i.e. participation mystique or unconscious projection]. Instead, often he is identified with his parents throughout his life, or he is identified with his affects and prejudices, and shamelessly accuses others of the things he will not see in himself."* (P. 123-4)

Jung says that what he labours for with his patients is the dissolution of participation mystique. In other words the chief aim of Jungian analysis is the withdrawal of projections, to bring about the same effect as that aimed for in the SOTGF.

"If the unconscious can be recognized as a co-determining quantity along with the conscious, and if we can live in such a way that conscious and unconscious, or instinctive demands, are given recognition as far as possible, the centre of gravity of the total personality shifts its position. It ceases to be in the ego, which is merely the centre of consciousness, and instead is located in a hypothetical point between the conscious and the unconscious, which might be called the self. If such a transposition succeeds ... a personality develops that suffers only in the lower stories, so to speak, but in the upper stories is singularly detached from painful as well as joyful events."

SO NOW IT'S ALL UP TO YOU!

