

Carl jung's analytical psychology theory



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Introduction

Carl Jung was born in a small Swiss village, Kessewil, on July 26, 1875. His father was a minister and his extended family in whose midst he grew up had quite a few clergy men. He went to boarding school and was mostly a loner, who did not enjoy schooling much and initially wanted to go into the field of archaeology after which he decided on medicine at the University of Basel, Switzerland (Storr, 1983).

Jung had many dreams, visions and fantasies that he carefully recorded. He was also an expert in many mythological and mystical traditions like Gnosticism, Kabala, Alchemy and Buddhism. All of these contributed increasingly to his views and theories that were developed in later years.

Jung's career path and his personality theory were influenced by many of his early experiences. After completing his medical degree from the University of Basel, he began his career at the University of Zurich in 1900. His doctoral thesis on Psychology and Occult phenomenon was heavily influenced by his years of work at the Zurich insane asylum. Jung's interest in parapsychology is clearly illustrated in his concepts and also in much of his work and writing.

Jung's own life was quite colorful, his marriage to Emma Rauschenbach and his affair with Toni Wolff who was a therapist working with him was a scandal that created waves in his academic and personal life. His own spell of psychological breakdown which lasted about 6 years led him to a deeper analysis of the psyche and also contributed to his ideas and thoughts in the later years.

Collective and Personal Unconscious

Jung's methods in Analytical Psychology were developed from Freud's concepts. He did agree to the idea of Libido being the driving force behind all actions, but he refused to agree that it constitutes only sexual energy. In addition to the Ego, he also talked about two types of unconscious being a part of the psyche- collective and personal. He explained the collective unconscious as being derived from years of experiences and something that has been acquired across a vast line of ancestors, which is common to all human beings. He derived this by advocating the idea that certain common themes or symbols have existed across cultures and in every individual which comprised what he called 'archetypes of the collective unconscious.' The more active part of the psyche was believed to be the personal unconscious.

He believed that the psyche operated on three main principles which were:

The principle of opposites: In every psyche there is an energy flowing from contrasting desires.

The principle of equivalence: There is energy that is equally available to both desires, one is fulfilled and the unfulfilled one must be acknowledged for balance and growth.

The principle of entropy: Much like in physics, the psyche also had a concept wherein the opposing poles that create this energy become less contrasting as we age leading to a more stable personality.

Archetypes: Jung described and listed various archetypes that constitute the psyche and personality of an individual. These included the Persona, the self, the anima, the animus and the shadow to name a few.

The persona refers to those masks we wear which allow us to act differently according to the constraints and expectations of society and individual situations. The persona is not simply a mask but also defines how an individual connects to others and fulfils the roles and responsibilities conferred upon them on various occasions.

The self is the true nature and propensities of the individual; it is believed to be the archetype of the psyche that is believed to be the main cause of wholeness and centrality. Jung believed the self to be the area that could lead to a reconciliation, acceptance and awareness of the opposing nature and forces that are constantly creating a struggle in the individual. When a person has acquired proper understanding and has come to terms with the many opposites or polarities of their nature, then they are growing closer to the process of complete understanding. Such a realization and acceptance of the self is what led to the greats like Buddha, Jesus and others to transcend their daily realities and be in tune with the life around them on a higher level.

The Anima was the feminine side or instincts that may occur in a male while animus was the male side that is seen in females.

The Animus was the masculine side that is there in females and it would define how women relate to males around them.

The projection of the anima is what Jung believed decided the kind of woman a man would fall in love with. Too much anima in a man can lead to effeminate habits while in a woman a greater expression of animus contributed to predominantly male traits such as aggression, dominance and so on.

The shadow refers to what in layman's terms would be called the dark side. It consists of all those repressed urges and instincts; it is the inferior being who we do not allow out. It is a primitive, uncontrolled part of us that is almost animal like in its responses and urges. There is often a personification of the shadow that occurs in many cases. This is why sometimes we develop an unexplained dislike of some traits in others of other individuals. On exploration it may be found to be a certain habit or urge that we have locked away in us. Jung does not condemn the shadow in man; he does not believe it needs to be locked away. Just as commonly we would always suspect something that is too good to be true, man must live with his dark side, accept that there is the 'other side' rather than live in the strain of denying it's very existence. There are conflicts created when we strive to live with ideals and illusions of perfection creating an irritability and lack of acceptance in the individuals. The danger of continually repressing the shadow is that it grows in strength in the unconscious until in one opportune moment it bursts out in a fit of uncontrollable rage and leads to many grave consequences. We can better relate to it when we think back to times when we said "I don't know what came over me!"

Jung's archetypes were many more and he believed that there wasn't a fixed number to the different archetypes that are seen. There are many others

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seen and each of these contributes to the individual, his or her learning, understanding and functioning in the world around them.

Complexes: Jung was also well known for his work on what he termed 'complexes' and how a word association test was developed to draw out these complexes in individuals. He is said to have arrived at the idea of complexes from word association tests conducted while recording galvanic skin responses. Jung stated that a complex is a set of suppressed feelings and thoughts that will gather around a certain theme of the archetype.

He said that complexes in themselves did not create neurosis. It is the reactions or behavior caused by the complexes that were problematic. Understanding their effects on behavior and acknowledging them was important for the process of growth and self fulfillment.

The ultimate goal of psychotherapy in Jungian analytics was individuation of the self by transcending the opposing energies. He arrived at the concept of Mandala which symbolized completion or wholeness and balance.

Jung helped his patients to look at their lives from a religious, historical and spiritual point of view. Individuals were encouraged to question, explore their psyche beyond their ego or 'I' and arrive at concepts rather than blindly following rules.

Another interesting concept that Jung propagated was that of Synchronicity and Teleology. These were both derived from his study of mythology and his own exploration of parapsychology. Synchronicity refers to two events that occur coincidentally, have different causes or origins but are connected in a

meaningful manner. Through teleology Jung spoke of how the past has bearing on the future by how it determines how we are led into the future by certain ideas we have about how it should be. Such esoteric and distinctive concepts are underlined and emphasized greatly in Jungian analytics which looks at weaving together psychology and spirituality in a manner of speaking. It is in this respect that he greatly differed from Freud's theories which were more carnal and expounded heavily on everything being driven by sexual desires.

Psychological Types

Jungian Analytics discusses various psychological types. Every individual has differences in temperament and perceptions that will make them see and react to situations differently. The primary distinction is based on attitude which can be classified as Extraverts and Introverts.

Extroverts are said to have an outward flow of their energy or libido. The extravert responds highly to external stimuli, situations, people, objects and is comfortable with interactions, relations and external accomplishments. Being a loner or a social isolate is not suited to people with such temperaments. The opposing pole of this is the introvert who is more in tune with the internal processes in the psyche and thus more open to feelings, fantasies, dreaming. These individuals prefer the subjective realm of images and thoughts and will function better individually than in large groups and also when free from external pressure to conform to the environment. People belonging to both categories hold one another beneath themselves.

Extroverts would feel introverts to be restricted and self centered. Introverts

would feel extroverts to be opportunistic, shallow and hypocritical. In every individual both tendencies are present but in different degrees. For example an extrovert would have underdeveloped introverted tendencies which can be seen in the form of depression.

An additional insight was that people have different ways of perceiving the world which Jung classified into four categories. These included thinking, sensing, intuiting and feeling.

Thinking: this involves individuals who take information into their system and evaluate, analyze and arrive at conclusions and ideas in a logical or rational manner. The thinker thus assesses and evaluates the raw information that he takes in from the outer and inner world.

Sensing: Sensing individuals gather information about the inner and outer world around them by gathering the inputs through their senses. A sensing individual gets to know the world and perceives what is around him by listening to what he can hear and looking at information.

Intuiting: Intuition is a level of perception that is beyond the usual level of consciousness, it involves putting together large amounts of information rather than what is just seen in the immediate environment.

Feeling: Feeling is much like thinking but it involves weighing the emotional responses that are evoked to the information that is gathered by an individual.

Each individual has each of these functions but uses them in different ways or to different degrees in their daily life. Jung sees the ideal to be the

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development of all of these functions even the opposite ones in the right degree to form a balanced individual. A personality typology was developed by Jung based on these particulars and these concepts were wildly popular and later developed into a type indicator by the mother daughter duo, Katherine Briggs and her daughter Isabel Briggs Myers. It came to be known as the Myers Briggs Type indicator.

For those looking for a more religious and mystical perspective, Jung's theories brought a sense of fulfillment, something they could truly relate to.