

Aleksandr Nikolaev

# Instinct vs. Ego-Identity

A Jungian, bodydynamic, neurophysiological, and process-oriented perspective



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**Nikolaev Aleksandr**

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Aleksandr Nikolaev  
consulted by Dr. Milana Vtyurina  
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# Introduction

*"In the last analysis, most of our difficulties come from losing contact with our instincts, with the age-old forgotten wisdom stored up in us."*

C. G. Jung

(source: McGuire & Hull, 1977, p. 89)

In psychological science and practice today, there are a huge variety of concepts and models reflecting the structure of the Ego - from isolatedly biological to socio-behavioral - depending on which paradigm the researcher belongs to and what is their point of view on the structure and origin of the psyche. **The authors of this work offer the reader a holistic model of the structure and development of the Ego Identity based on a synthesis of ideas by C. G. Jung and A. Mindell, neuroscientists' modern inventions in the field of brain mapping, as well as biodynamic conceptions about sensitive periods of development\*.**

Since Jung considered the archetype as the structural basis of the psyche, and the manifestation of the instinctive human nature as the archetype's behavioral and social actualization, the article begins by examining various points of view on what the instinct is. Further on, this paper summarizes Jung's views about the archetypes and their relation with the instincts, the structure of the psyche, and correlation with some philosophical and evolutionary systems and scientific research, such as: Taoism, psychiatrist Anthony Stevens' concept of the archetype manifesting in the instinctive behavioral responses, neurology professor Michael Merzenich's research about sensitive periods forming the projection brain areas, Lisbeth Marcher's research on bodydynamics in the field of psychomotor development in various age periods, Arnold Mindell's process-oriented psychology.

In addition, for the reader's convenience, a Glossary of terms describing the Ego Structure, is provided at the end of the article. The article contains a significant number of quotations from original sources with the aim to attract attention of psychologists working in psychodynamic paradigm with both the transpersonal aspect and the body experience, to the studies of Carl Jung and his followers exploring this topic.

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\* See References at the end of the article.

# What is Instinct

The term "instinct" in the sense of desire or motivation was first used by stoic Chrysippus (3rd century BC) to characterize the behavior of birds and other animals. Real studies of the instinct, however, began only in the 18th century driven by the works of the French materialists and naturalists. Some of them considered the instinct a reduction (degeneration) of the mind; others, on the contrary, its germ (Le Roy). La Mettrie argued that all living organisms had a "purely mechanical property <...> to act best for their self-preservation"; he noted that the instinct came from inherited habits, resulting from the satisfaction of vital needs. According to Charles Darwin, the instinct was species adaptive behaviors generated through the inheritance of acquired characteristics and natural selection that preserved a variety of more basic instincts accidentally appeared yet useful for the species. Ivan Pavlov viewed the instinct as a complex unconditioned reflex, by means of which organisms interacted with the environment.

Thus, each genus or species has its own instincts determined by the complexity of its anatomical and morphological structures and especially the nervous system. Instincts reflect the valuable experience of previous generations, actualized in the form of behavioral reactions. The ability to polish an instinctive action is transmitted by inheritance.

Manifestation of the instinct does not occur in itself; first of all, there should be an appropriate biological urge (need or motivation), whereby the glands of internal secretion are activated, blood composition changes, temperature increases or decreases, etc. Then comes the search phase, which can last long enough – until the triggering stimulus in the form of an external object is found (an individual of the opposite sex, source of the new odor, color, etc.). Only in this case, an instinctive physical reaction is launched.

**Instinctive behavior is characterized by stereotype, expediency and automatism, but it is meaningful only when external conditions are constant.** Herein lies the main difference between the instinctive activities and conscious activities: in the former case, there is no conscious foreknowledge of the results of activities, which is necessary when the external environment changes. This shortcoming of instinctive activities, however, is mitigated by its plasticity: in the course of life, instincts can be attenuated or amplified, making it possible to align instinctive behavior.

***Example.** If a child wants to eat, it sucks the breast once it is near (an instinctive activity, innate unconditioned reflex). If there is a bottle of milk instead of the breast, the child spits it out and reaches for the breast. But over time, it gets used to the fact that food is supplied from the bottle, and when the infant wants to eat, it begins to reach for the bottle (a change in instinctive activity).*

**Human activities are determined by conscious motives, instincts playing a subordinate role.** Yet, when the control of the brain cortex over the underlying subcortical structures weakens (in the state of sleep, intoxication, affect, etc.), instincts can erupt.

To date, instincts are divided into three categories. Vital instincts are aimed at ensuring the functioning of the body (dissatisfaction of needs leads to death of an individual, satisfaction of needs does not require participation of another individual). Role or zoo-social instincts express the vital need in relationships between individuals (aimed at the survival of the species). Self-development (intellectual) instincts are aimed at learning the world (future-oriented with the purpose of improving psychic activity).

## Instinct and Archetype

Consequently, researchers at different times have put different contents in the concept of instinct. In some cases, the instinct was opposed to the consciousness, and in relation to people, the term served to indicate passion, impulsive, thoughtless behavior, "animal nature" of the human psyche, etc. In other cases, the instinct stood for complex unconditioned reflexes, neural mechanisms coordinating vital motions, etc. This difference is governed by the distinction of psychological and physiological approaches to the topic.

If we look at it from the point of view of *psychophysiology*, we can talk about the so called "instinctive mechanisms". It is logical to assume that there should be some kind of impulse behind them. Psychologists call it differently but the meaning boils down to one: it is a kind of energy that seeks to be expressed at the physical level. Jung calls this energy "libido", defining it as what is hidden behind the concept of "archetype". And for example, in the Taoist tradition, this corresponds to the notion of the Primordial breath or Chi that gives birth to Great Absolute (Taiji), which is the basis for thousands of transformations.

C. G. Jung, explaining the psychological meaning of the collective unconscious, wrote: "The instincts are not vague and indefinite by nature, but are specifically formed motive forces which, long before there is any consciousness, and in spite of any degree of consciousness later on, pursue their inherent goals. Consequently they form very close analogies to the archetypes, so close, in fact, that there is good reason for supposing that the archetypes are the unconscious images of the instincts themselves, in other words, that they are patterns of instinctual behavior. The hypothesis of the collective unconscious is, therefore, no more daring than to assume there are instincts. One admits readily that human activity is influenced to a high degree by instincts, quite apart from the rational motivations of the conscious mind. So if the assertion is made that out imagination, perception, and thinking are likewise influenced by inborn and universally present formal elements, it seems to me that a normally functioning intelligence can discover in this idea just as much or just as little mysticism as in the theory of instincts..."

**"...There are as many archetypes as there are typical situations in life.** Endless repetition has engraved these experiences into our psychic constitution, not in the form of images filled with content, but at first only as forms without content, representing merely the possibility of a certain type of perception and action. **When a situation occurs which corresponds to a given archetype, that archetype becomes activated and a compulsiveness appears, which, like an instinctual drive, gains its way against all reason and will, or else produces a conflict of pathological dimensions, that is to say, a neurosis"**.

*Example. The gaze of a man walking in a park with his wife and children gets riveted on a passing woman wearing a short skirt.*

As we can see, Jung considered archetypes as preconscious psychic predisposition (innate possibility of certain forms of behavior and perception), which is closely related to instincts. At the same time, he considered the collective unconscious as a kind of structural formula, which had been manifested at the material level in the form of instinct before individual consciousness emerged. Furthermore, the materialization of this formula had begun at least with the first attempts of manifestation of life on earth. It somehow resembles the theosophical ideas of the collective soul and its gradual differentiation in the process of evolution "from stone to plant, from plant to animal, and from animal to man". In his scientific writings, Jung did not express this idea directly, but much about it can be found in his correspondence and in the works of his immediate followers, Emma Jung, Marie-Louise von Franz, and Edward Edinger. For example, here is an excerpt of Claude Drey's interview with Maria Louise von Franz:

"Claude Drey : Would we say that the archetypes are the roots of life?

von Franz: We Jungians would say that. Behind the first alga was the archetype <...> and from it came plants and animals over millions of years - we would say this took place under the guidance of the archetype.

CD: Is life therefore a manifestation of the original archetype?

von Franz: Yes. Jung does not dare to say that, but we can infer it from what he says. That is why he says in his book on synchronicity that it looks sometimes as if the archetypes are not only psychic structures but are world-creating structures as well. That is, the archetypes are not only structures of our unconscious but are structures of the whole universe."

And later in the interview:

"Dray: I have another technical question: what would be a good example of matter producing a psyche?

Von Franz: Well, for example, we know that the process of evolution began with inorganic matter, then appeared plants and animals that had something like a psyche. If we were not biased, we would have interpreted the diversity of their reactions as physiological reactions. Then there comes man who originates from apes and monkeys and who has a psyche. So, on this planet, inorganic matter has produced beings with a psyche. The theological explanation is that inorganic matter has produced only bodies and that God has blown a psyche into them. But we do not believe that.

Dray: Oh, you mean that the process of evolution...

Von Franz: ...produced beings made of matter and psyche. We must therefore assume that from the beginning matter was somewhat psychoid.

Dray: So, we can say that psyche produces matter and matter produces psyche.

Von Franz: Yes. Yes.

Dray: We don't know what came first?

Von Franz: We do not believe in the theological idea that matter gave rise to plants and animals with their own souls, and the next day matter gave rise to a higher ape and God came in and blew a psyche in it. This is a poor explanation. So, if you believe in evolution just as we do, you can say that matter on this planet has produced psychic beings.

In general, the anticipation of this kind can be found in various stages of the mystical process of transformation, as well as different degrees of initiation into mysteries.

Drey: How is the archetype of the Self different from the archetype of the individuation process?

Von Franz: I would say that the archetype of the Self is something that initiates and governs the individuation process. And the individuation process, as the name implies, is the process of knowing of Self. Let's say for example, a child has a vision of God; you can say it is the archetype of the Self. Later in life the child becomes a great personality and slowly realizes the full value of his or her vision, which has been actualized through the process of individuation. It is a slow process of realizing what has always been there."

This approach is also reflected in other philosophical concepts. For example, in the theory of Taoism; particularly, in the concepts of the "Earlier Heaven" and the "Later Heaven" as well as the structure of hexagrams in the Book of Changes (Yi Ching).

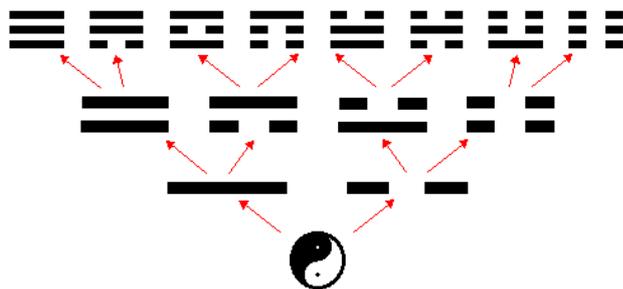


Fig. 1

What is of interest for us here is the correlation between the eight trigrams (including the scheme of their emergence - Fig. 1) and Jung's typology, the relationship between the Tao and the Self, Yin and Anime, Yang and Animus, the structure of the hexagrams and the archetypes; as well as the Yi Ching, which describes the cyclical development and cycle-to-cycle transition both within one hexagram and within the whole system, with regard to the concept of the path of individuation.

Here's how Marie-Louise von Franz describes it in her book "Psyche and Matter": «The material world arises according to the Chinese in the following way: First there is a preexistent image (trigram); then a copy of this takes shape in corporeal form. What regulates this process of imitation is called a pattern. "What is above form is called tao; what is within form is called tool." The movements of the lines and images, and of the infinitesimal germs of events symbolized by them, are invisible, but their results manifest themselves in the visible world as good fortune or misfortune. "The lines and images move within, and good fortune and misfortune reveal themselves without." Here we come across intimations of the fact that the archetypes of the collective unconscious are like these "seeds"; they are imperceptible, invisible in a way, only potentially real; only when they become actualized in the form of an archetypal image do they become "real," and only then do they seem to enter our consciousness and with it into our space-time world».

In other words, if we look at the archetypes from the perspective of the Taoist scheme of how the Great Absolute manifests itself, we can, by analogy, consider them as Yang and Yin. In the chain of mutual entanglements, Yang and Yin give complex reactions, which in their physical manifestation can be observed as instinctive activities of the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous system. They are like the Taiji sign: processes flow from one to the other, manifesting themselves just as much as the stimulus requires for the organism to survive.

**Example.** *The mother half-looks after her child crawling on and around her while she saves energy and rests on the bed. When the infant reaches the edge of the bed, she quickly pulls it to the center, momentarily activating her muscles and attention.*

In this connection, the approach of Taoist alchemy to the evolution of consciousness is also of interest. It considers the spiral movement from the "Earlier Heaven" to the "Later Heaven", and then back to the "Earlier Heaven" now in the state of awareness. In Taoism this is called "following the way of Tao". Jung called it the path of individuation meaning the process of differentiation of the ego from the unconscious and the establishment of the ego-Self Axis.

If, in this context, we look at conditioned reflexes ("Later Heaven"), we can see that they substitute for unconditioned reflexes ("Earlier heaven"), when the latter do not allow the organism to survive during the adaptation to the environment. This departure from the "Early Heaven" state is a departure from the instincts as the chain of unconditioned reflexes and a transition to life through conditioned reflexes that start arising as early as in the perinatal period of the child's development and continue to shape in the process of adaptation to the environment. This is an important part of the path of individuation, because without it, we would not have a single stimulus for further development. The organism, by adapting to the surrounding world, creates new forms of psychic reactions, thus forming the ego.

**Example.** *The mother goes out of sight, the child becomes anxious and cries. She comes back and smiles at the baby, its anxiety goes away. In adulthood, such a person will not hide their feelings. If the mother returns and punishes the child, the instinct of self-preservation activates: it is dangerous to cry... In this case, a pattern of behavior is laid down connected to the fact that it is not safe to show one's emotions. Thus, in the course of upbringing, there happens a transition from the "Earlier Heaven" state to the "Later Heaven" state.*

So is the natural instinct, where impossible to be adequately manifested outward, interrupted and split into two parts. The part of the instinct that was not accepted by the environment and therefore was repressed into the unconscious, continues to exist and respond to external stimuli at the level of **subcortical structures** (Mindell's secondary process), while the part that received approval and support, pings through **the brain cortex** (primary process). **If the response to a stimulus traveling through the cortex divisions, corresponds to the instinctive reactions to a similar stimulus, the person feels psychologically well and calm.**

***Example.** As the vehicle slowed down abruptly, a passenger fell on a woman; she immediately pushed them away and felt better. At home, her small child jumped on her, whom she hugged joyfully.*

**If not**, in parallel to the reactions associated with the brain cortex, reactions associated with subcortical structures are triggered. They seem to contradict each other, which causes an **internal conflict** at the level of psyche. A conflict that we experience through the respective elements of a complex (in Processwork terms, channels): proprioception, movement, images, meanings...

***Example.** As the vehicle slowed down abruptly, a passenger fell on a woman; she immediately pushed them away and felt better. At home, her cheerful child jumped on her, whom she automatically pushed away.*

Yet it is this conflict that becomes the incentive that leads to awareness and enables the instinct to fully "register" in the brain cortex (an inner conflict demands resolution; phase 3, according to Mindell). In this case, the instinct turns from an unconscious urge into a conscious response subject to control by an individual. Taoism sees this process as the return from the "Later Heaven" state to the "Earlier Heaven" state (Mindell's phase 4) by means of alchemical processes connected with the mindful control over the processes occurring in the body.

***Example.** In therapy, the woman explored why her hands were so hard to push the child away when it suddenly jumped on her. After working on the perception of her boundaries, ensuring the right to protect them, empowering her arms and expanding the feeling in the body through internal sensations, movement, shouting, visual images and meanings behind them, she found out that the body became more soft, flexible and relaxed. After that, her hands naturally cushioned the child jumping on her and smoothly but surely put back those who happened to lean on her in public transport. In both cases, the woman did not feel aggressive.*

In connection with the foregoing, Michael Merzenich's research in neurophysiology is of utmost interest. The professor of University of California concluded that the projection areas of our brain at birth resemble "rough drafts". Like sketches, they lack detail and are not differentiated. It is only in the course of development, particularly in sensitive periods - when our brain mapping structure is formed under the influence of life experience - that the draft becomes detailed and differentiated. During these periods, the instincts have the opportunity to "register" in the brain cortex fully, partially, or "not register" at all, depending on the external conditions. This is how basic patterns of behavior are laid and further differentiated under the influence of the environment.

The difference between brain plasticity in a sensitive period and in adulthood is that in a sensitive period, brain maps can be altered by simple exposure to the outside world because the learning mechanism is permanently enabled. This "enabled state" has an important biological significance for further development of a child. It is a period when, using Neuman's definition, "personalization of the archetype" takes place.

**Example.** *A small child feels bad, uncomfortable, crying. The mother gives it the breast, and it starts to eat - this is a reflex reaction. The infant now feels better, and it is registered in its brain cortex that "feeling bad" was about hunger. In the future, the individual simply understands that he or she wants to eat, and satisfies this need.*

The ego at this point has no conscious choice what to do: the action occurs involuntarily, and works as a "complex", i.e. unconscious reaction. This is why it can be called ego-complex. Only later a brain that already has a certain organization, is able to pay special (voluntary) attention to current processes and adjust them, retraining itself by virtue of its plasticity.

This process is called by Jung the emergence of the ego-Self axis, or awareness. It is this axis that allows the ego to shift in its development from the stage of ego-complex to the stage of ego-consciousness. This is not just a return from the conditioned to the unconditioned reflex triggered by a stimulus and responding to it with the adequate strength, but an ability to consciously observe and control one's unconditioned reflex (what makes difference between Mindell's phase 4 and phase 1). Jung shows this process in the ego-Self axis emergence scheme (Fig. 2).

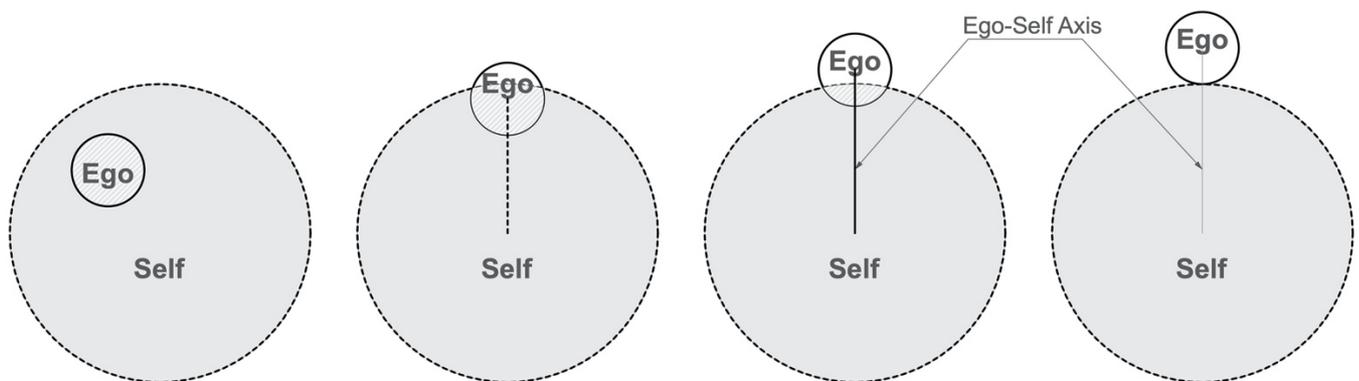


Fig. 2

***Example.** In a sensitive period when it is especially important for a child to express its unique opinion to the surrounding majority, Paul's father listened to his son with interest (the experience occurred and was supported - see Variant 1 below), John's father interrupted him mid-sentence (the experience occurred but wasn't completed - Variant 3), and in Stephen's family no one ever had their own opinion – everyone obeyed the will of the grandfather who was a very respected person in town (the experience did not occur at all – Variant 2). Having grown up (allegedly when people are not yet aware of their ego-complexes, personal and collective unconscious; they either “don't know” (Mindell's phase 1) or “suffer and battle” (phase 2)), Paul kept a blog where he shared political forecasts, John envied a colleague who was not afraid to share his expert opinion with his boss, and Stephen attended satsangs in the hope of meeting a guru who would not deceive him. After the mid-life crisis (when the ego has allegedly differentiated from the unconscious to an extent that the ego-Self axis appears – a period of actualization); Paul became more aware of the power of his influence, trying to refrain from manipulating others' trust, John founded a center where he helped the deaf-mutes to creatively express themselves, and Stephen successfully facilitated conflicts in teams, recognizing and naming all the diversity of opinions in the field.*

## Ego Structure

Summing up the foregoing, it is now possible to depict the structure of the ego in the form of a diagram (see Fig. 3 below). The dashed circle indicates the boundaries of the ego. Within it lies the potential of the ego to know itself (bringing in awareness and moving from the ego-complex to the ego-consciousness). The rest of the space around the ego circle is what Jung called the Self.

Each of the segments of the circle indicates the possibility of a reaction to certain stimuli, a manifestation of one or another archetype (psychic structure) on the physical level. Depending on the environmental conditions, an archetype can be: **1. fully manifested; 2. partially manifested; 3. or not manifested at all.**

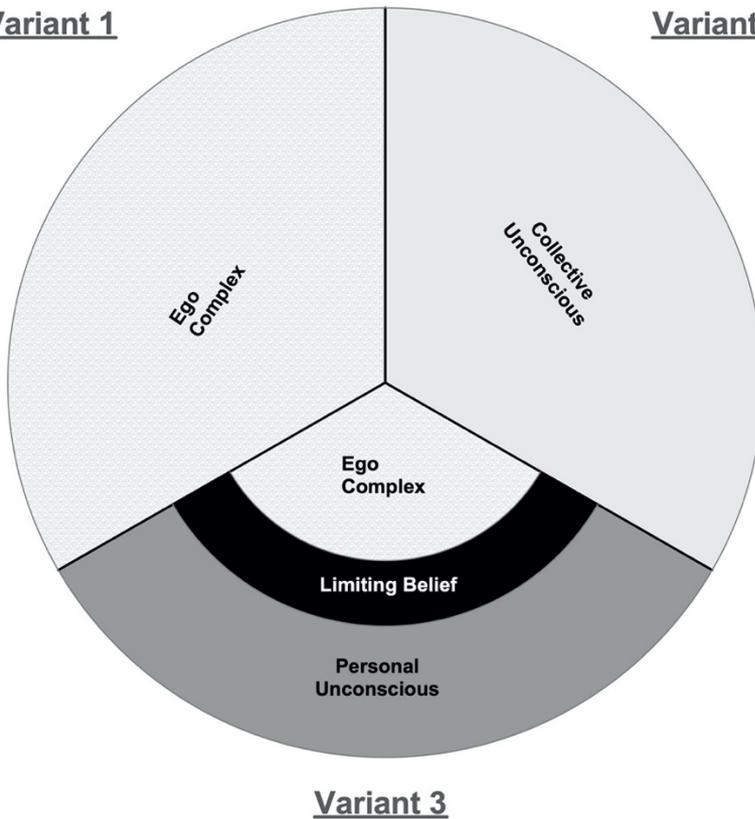
Variant 1. If the new experience is supported by the environment, it manifests itself as ego-complex, which can later be known;

Variant 2. If the new experience is not supported by the environment at all, it does not register in the brain maps and can be defined as the missing experience related to the collective unconscious;

Variant 3. If the reaction is possible to occur, but later on it is not accepted and not supported, being stopped by a limiting belief (parental mindset), the original reaction breaks into parts, so to say; it can be defined as an interrupted experience, part of which is repressed into the personal unconscious.

Variant 1

Variant 2



Variant 3

Fig. 3

Next, in figures 4, 5, 6, consider a staged development of the ego structure for all of the three variants, by the example of one fragment in relation to a particular stimulus.

Variant 1: Environment supports manifestation of the new experience.

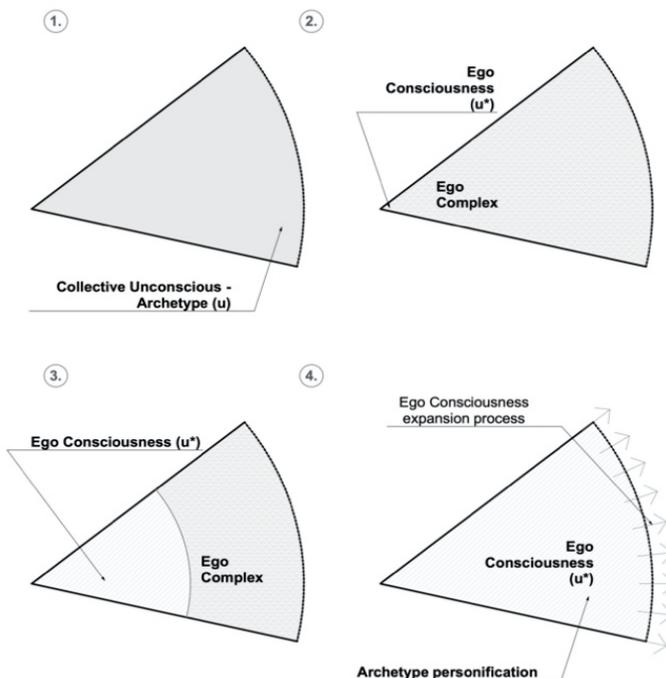
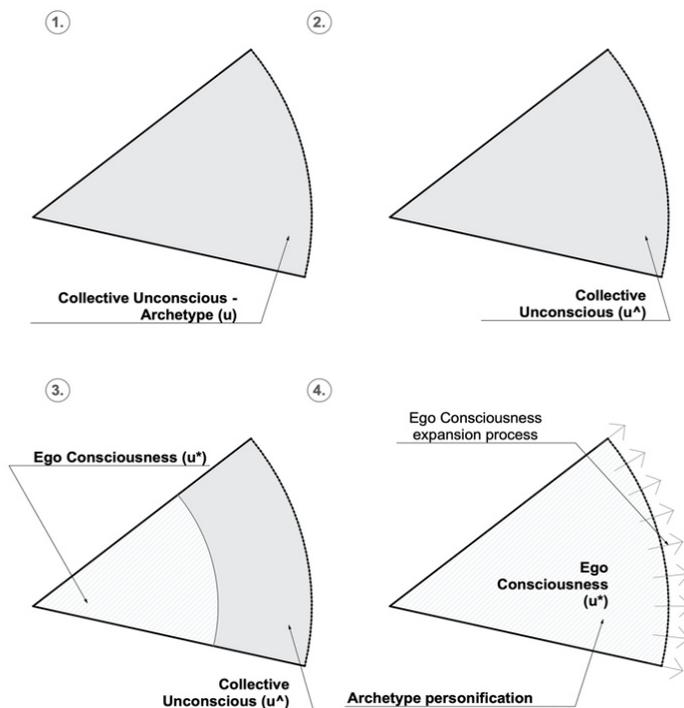


Fig. 4

Originally and potentially, there is a possibility of full and free manifestation of a reaction to a certain stimulus (4.1). If the reaction is accepted by the environment, it registers in the brain cortex as the ego-complex (4.2) and in the future can become conscious and controlled through awareness – a growth of the ego-consciousness (4.3 and 4.4). So does the little u grow towards the Big U, according to Mindell.

**Example.** A small child feels bad, uncomfortable, crying. The mother gives it the breast, and it starts to eat - this is a reflex reaction (archetype of the collective unconscious). The infant now feels better, and it is registered in its brain cortex that "feeling bad" was about hunger. In the future, the individual simply understands that he or she wants to eat, and satisfies this need by any means (ego-complex). When faced in life with the fact that satisfying his or her needs can bring discomfort to others, and reflecting on it, the individual can begin to consciously regulate when, where and how to satisfy this need (ego-consciousness).

Variant 2: Environment does not support manifestation of the new experience from the beginning.

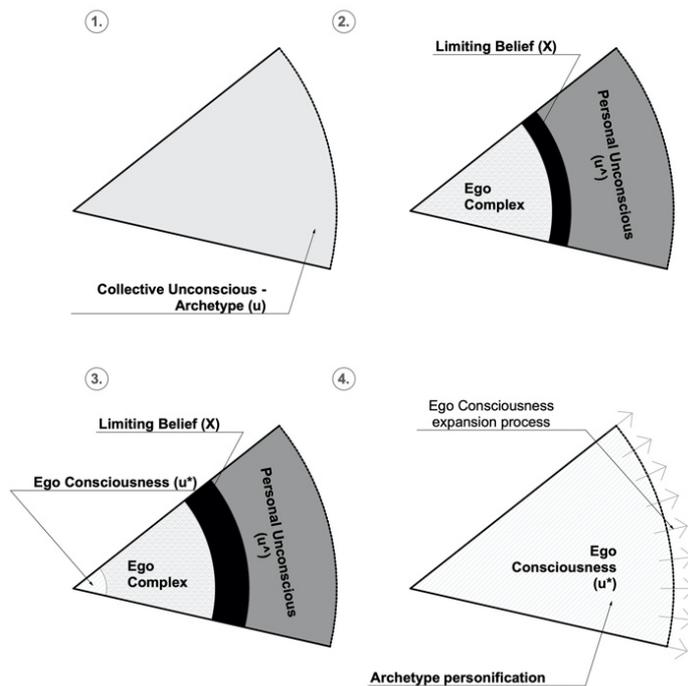


Originally and potentially, there is a possibility of full and free manifestation of a reaction to a certain stimulus (5.1). If the response is not accepted by the environment at all, it does not register as the ego-complex (5.2) but in future, while learning, can register in the brain cortex and become conscious and controlled through the growth of the ego-consciousness (5.3 and 5.4).

Fig. 5

**Example.** A small child feels bad, uncomfortable, crying. The mother's actions do not meet its need, and it does not register in the brain cortex what this "feeling bad" is about (archetype of the collective unconscious has not become the ego-complex). In the future, when hungry, such a person feels a sense of discomfort and anxiety, without understanding what it is about. At best, he or she can project this need to another: "You probably want to eat". Noticing, however, that "feeling bad" vanishes after eating, such a person gradually registers this neural link (ego-consciousness).

Variant 3: The new experience has the opportunity to manifest itself, but later on the environment does not accept or support it.



Originally and potentially, there is a possibility of full and free manifestation of a reaction to a certain stimulus (6.1). If the reaction has an opportunity to manifest itself, but later on is strictly suppressed, it gets broken into parts, as described above, by a limiting, interrupting belief (6.2), which creates an inner conflict.

Fig. 6

**Example.** *The mother goes out of sight, the child becomes anxious and cries. The mother returns and punishes the child, its instinct of self-preservation activates – it is dangerous to cry... A pattern of behavior is now laid down connected to the fact that it is not safe to show one's emotions. In adulthood, this is a very reserved person. By paying attention to their psychosomatic reactions or relationship problems, he or she will gradually make more room for their feelings.*

The **ego-complex** here is the part of the unconditioned, innate reaction, whose manifestation is encouraged in this environment, thus allowing the child to survive in it. This part is registered in the brain maps.

The other part, which is not accepted, whose manifestation is dangerous in this environment, is referred by Jung to **the personal unconscious**. In other words, it is repressed or marginalized. From the viewpoint of neurophysiology, it is also registered in the brain maps but repressed by a stronger impulse. In Jung's terminology, it is the **autonomous complex**.

In the situation of nonacceptance, there is one more part, the **limiting belief**. This part represents an autonomous complex of reactions as to how the child inhibits reactions of the rejected part. In psychology, this part is associated with the parental introject, in the process-oriented approach this is **X, the energy of the edge figure**.

Lastly, the part of the archetype, which has no opportunity at all to manifest itself in the environment, does not register in the brain maps either. It remains to belong to **the collective unconscious**.

Thus, **the original archetype splits into the ego complex, limiting belief, personal and collective unconscious** (Fig. 6.2).

In the future, the growth of the ego-consciousness, based on the resolution of inner conflicts variously manifested in life, leads to the gradual reunion of these parts (Fig. 6.3) and complete "personification of the archetype" (Fig. 6.4). That is the time when the ego becomes fully aware of itself. **Self-awareness, or the path of individuation, in the psychological sense means a psychic process that leads to the differentiation of the individual from the collective psyche and his or her development into an individual personality.**

Here is what Carl Gustav's wife Emma Jung wrote about it in "The Grail Legend": «Individuality is indeed an *a priori* datum, but it only exists unconsciously as a specific "pattern" or "predisposition" determined by the genes. The realization of individuality does not come about *eo ipso*, since it unquestionably requires a coming to terms with the environment, with which the individual often feels unable to cope. <...> The conflict between them and their reconciliation requires the development of consciousness. <...> The development of consciousness progresses with increasing encounters with the outer world. Normally this adaptation to the surroundings is the task and content of the first half of life. In the second half, the problem is that of becoming aware of the inherent individuality and its realization, in the sense indicated above».

Adaptation to the environment takes place especially intensively during the sensitive periods of personality development. Consider the ego structure based on the sensitive periods corresponding to the **bodydynamics character structures** (Fig. 7). This classification distinguishes between the seven structures of characters – periods when basic patterns of behavior are laid and fundamental "**rights**" of the individual are claimed: the right to 1. existence, 2. needs, 3. autonomy, 4. will, 5. love and sexuality, 6. opinion, 7. solidarity and expression of interests. In each of the structures there can be three possible scenarios: **norm, hyper-response and hypo-response**. In the context of this article, we can say that the norm corresponds to the complete registration of the instinct in the brain maps (see above Variant 1), the hyper-response to the breaking of the instinct into parts (see Variant 3), and the hypo-response when the instinct does not register in the brain maps but manifests itself in the form of reactions at the level of subcortical structures (see Variant 2).

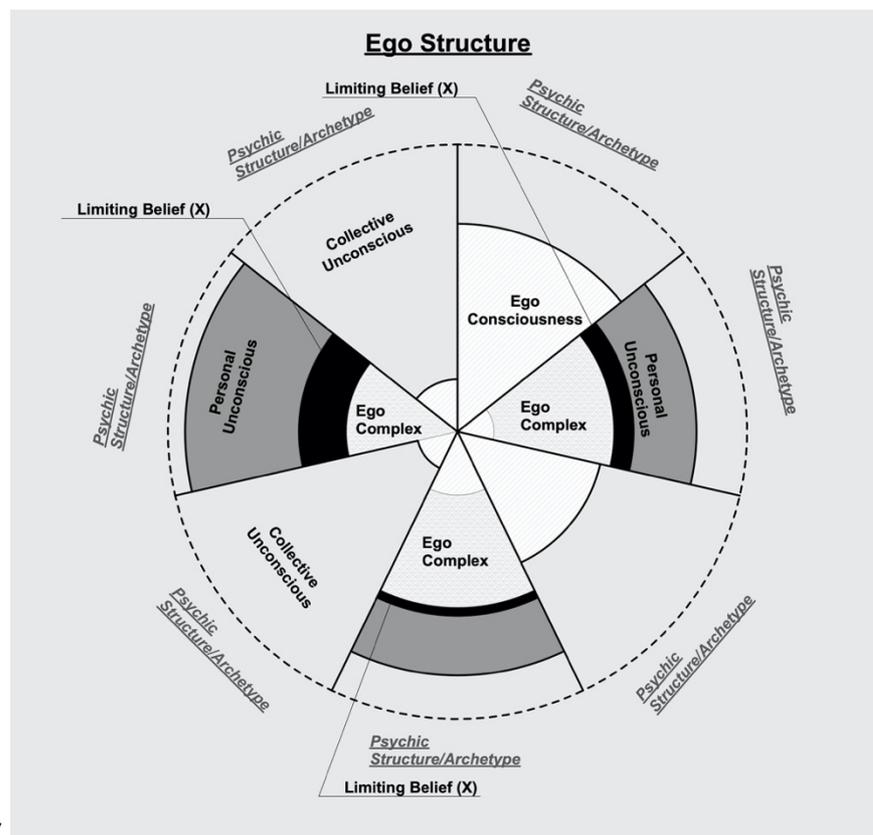


Fig. 7

This way for each individual in each psychic structure (archetype, instinct), a unique combination of the ego-consciousness, ego-complex, limiting beliefs, personal and collective unconscious is formed thus determining the person's peculiarities of development (Fig. 8).

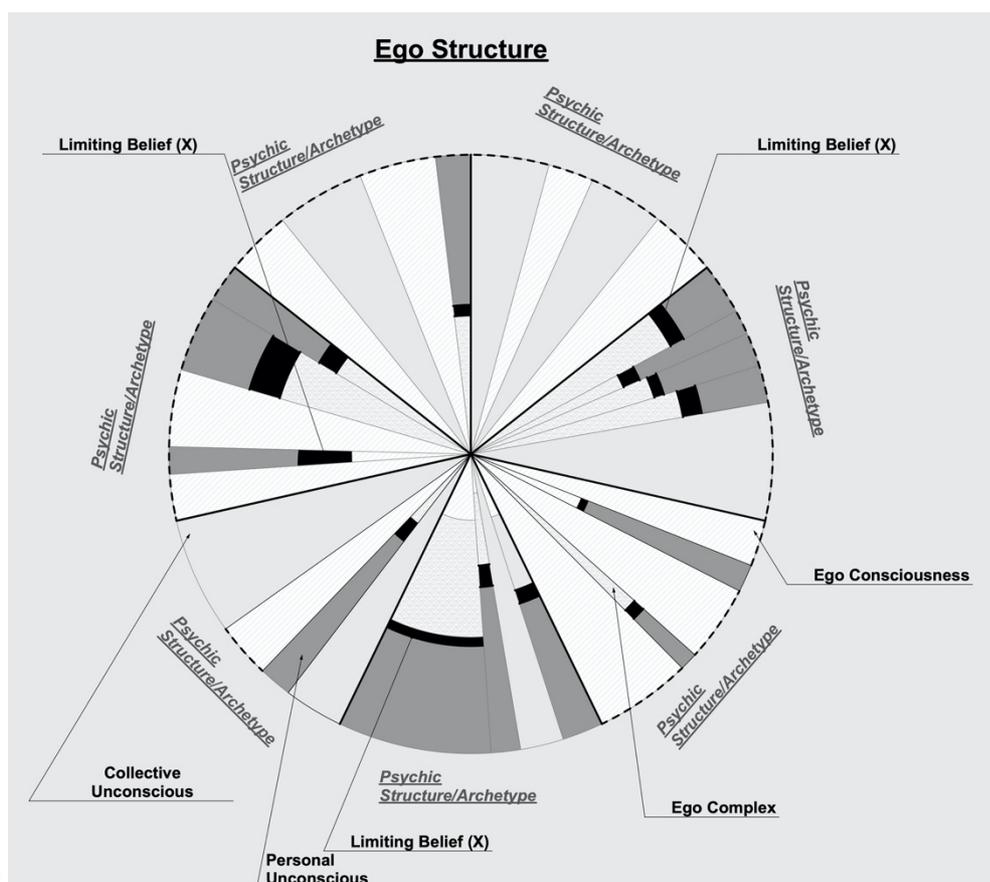


Fig. 8

**Example.** Alex freely expresses himself in public (the structure of will, his performances were admired, Variant 1). At the same time, he demands the same freedom from his colleagues (that is, he lives out of the ego-complex that has not yet become the ego-consciousness; in Mindell's terms, he is not aware of his psychological rank). Again, Alex is shy to get acquainted with those he really likes (the structure of autonomy and the structure of existence: "I want to be with you, but I'm afraid of not being accepted"; the experience occurred but was interrupted, Variant 3; out of the ego-complex he remains single, the possibility of a close relationship is repressed into the personal unconscious, his limiting belief being: "I am not worthy of true love; I bring pain"). In sex, the main thing for Alex is orgasm; simple touches are devalued and do not bring the same pleasure as for his partner ("the structure of need", the experience did not happen at all: the mother did not use to caress, the son slept swaddled separately, Variant 2; there is nothing to repress into the personal unconscious, gentle touches stay in the collective unconscious as the potential and experience of humanity, Alex only reads about them in books and sometimes experiences in nightmares, suffering from dry skin while awake). Over time, Alex can recognize his feeling free in public as a personal power, a resource of acceptance, and use it to meet a girl who can give him experience of touch.

Thus, as Anthony Stevens writes in his book "Archetype revisited. An Updated Natural History of the Self": "Once one conceives of archetypes as the neuropsychic centres responsible for co-ordinating the behavioural and psychic repertoires of our species in response to whatever environmental circumstances we may encounter, they become directly comparable to the

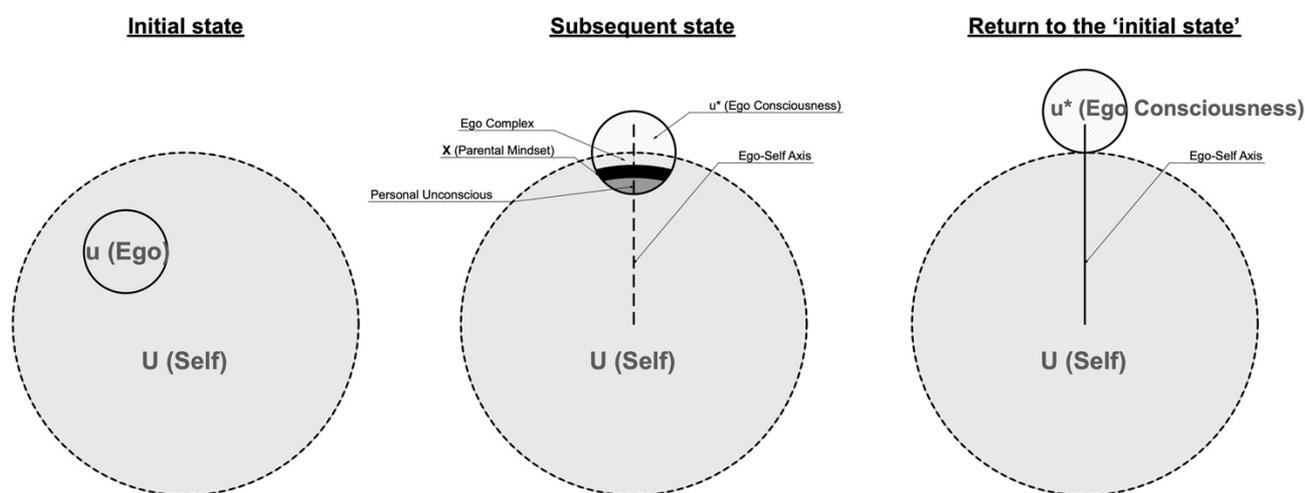
“innate releasing mechanisms responsible for Lorenz's 'species-specific patterns of behaviour' and Bowlby's 'goal-corrected behavioural systems’”.

Or elsewhere: "Jung asserted that all the essential psychic characteristics that distinguish us as human beings are with us from birth. These typically human attributes Jung called archetypes. He regarded archetypes as basic to all the usual phenomena of human life. While he shared Freud's view that personal experience was of critical significance for the development of each individual, he denied that this development was a process of accretion or absorption occurring in an unstructured personality. On the contrary, for Jung, the essential role of personal experience was to develop what is already there, to actualize the archetypal potential already present in the psychophysical organism, to activate what is latent or dormant in the very substance of the personality, to develop what is encoded in the genetic make-up of the individual, in a manner similar to that by which a photographer, through the addition of chemicals and the use of skill, brings out the image impregnated in a photographic plate."

It becomes obvious that the same ideas are the basis of Arnold Mindell's process-oriented psychology. Everything already exists, all we need is to let it manifest and be aware of this experience in our lives.

The three levels of awareness, proposed by Processwork, correspond to the level of the material plane (Consensus), the level of "broken into parts" archetypes (Dreamland), and the level of the collective unconscious where the Self is the organizing principle of all archetypes (Essence level). A subjectively perceived world is represented at the Consensus level. Perception of this world completely depends on the relationship between our inner figures representing different parts of the "broken" archetype and manifesting themselves as ego-complexes and autonomous complexes, to use Jung's terminology. Sensory-grounded experience and integration of the energies behind these parts, gives us the opportunity to reunite a once "broken" archetype. Each such reunion ensures the growth of the ego-consciousness and in a way draws a thread to the archetype of the Self. The more threads, the louder the voice of the Self, or the Big U, in Mindell's terms. The Ego, or the little u\* strives, therefore, in its development to manifest the Big U while the Big U strives to be manifested through the growth of awareness of the little u\*. Both processes take place as a result of conflicts – the X energy or parental mindsets that affect the little u energy, according to Mindell. The little u here is the energy of an intact archetype, something that had been before the limiting belief was formed under the influence of the X energy.

Fig. 9



# Conclusion

In conclusion, it is best to quote Anthony Stevens' "Archetype revisited. An Updated Natural History of the Self ":

«In the course of being actualized the Self is inevitably constrained by the living circumstances of the growing individual, especially by the personality and culture of his parents and the nature of his relationship to them. Just as no parent can ever hope to actualize the totality of the parental archetype, so no ego can ever incorporate the wholeness of the Self. Incarnation entails sacrifice: it means fragmentation ('disintegration') and distortion of the original undifferentiated archetypal state: many aspects of the Self will prove unacceptable to the family milieu and consequently are relegated to the Shadow (Freud's personal unconscious), while others will remain unactualized and will persist as unconscious and latent archetypal potential, which may or may not be activated at a later date. Thus, in every individual life-span some distortion of primary archetypal intent is unavoidable: we are all of us, to a greater or lesser degree, only a 'good enough' version of the Self. This fact is of the utmost psychiatric significance, because the extent of the distortion is the factor that makes all the difference between neurosis and mental health. Moreover, the life-long struggle of each individual to achieve some resolution of the dissonance between the needs of the conscious personality and the dictates of the Self is at the very heart of the individuation process».

«Here lies the essence of the critical distinction which must be made between individuation and the biological unfolding of the life-cycle. The two processes are, of course, interdependent in the sense that one cannot possibly occur without the other, yet they are fundamentally different. The life-cycle is the indispensable condition of individuation; but individuation is not blindly living out the life-cycle: it is living it consciously and responsibly, and is ultimately a matter of ethics. Individuation is a conscious attempt to bring the universal programme of human existence to its fullest possible expression in the life of the individual».

What we seem to be — to ourselves and to others — is only a fraction of what there is in us to be. And as a result the Self is never satisfied: it knows that the ego could do better if it tried. For this reason it never stops prompting and advising; it is forever tugging in new directions, always seeking to expand and readapt the habits and clichés of consciousness, sending us bad dreams and disturbing thoughts, making us question the value of things we hold dear, mocking our complacent pretensions to have 'arrived'. This is the secret of man's 'Divine discontent'. For all of us, so much more is 'planned for' than we can ever hope to realize in conscious actuality: our lives are crowded with lost opportunities. Yet, for those who have ears to hear, the call to individuate ('the voice of God within') is constantly transmitted to the ego by the Self. Unfortunately, reception is often jammed by interference from the parental complexes; and such is our extraverted concern with the material world that few of us heed these inner incitements to greater Self-fulfilment».

# Glossary

**Ego (ego-identity)** – a set of automatic, not controlled arbitrarily, as well as arbitrarily controlled reactions, with which the individual is identified.

**Ego-complex** – a part of the ego-identity related to a set of automatic, not controlled arbitrarily, reactions (patterns) caused by and associated with inner belief systems. The ego-complex consists of conditioned and unconditioned reflexes and is largely determined by them.

**Ego-consciousness** – a part of the ego-identity related to a set of arbitrarily controlled reactions, of which a person is aware and can choose how to respond.

Thus, the ego-identity includes the ego-complex and the ego-consciousness. Arnold Mindell introduces the concepts of primary and secondary processes. If we consider these concepts within the inner conflict determined by the client's request, the ego-complex will be the primary process. If we define the primary process as the ego-identity on the whole, beyond the inner conflict, the primary process will also include the conscious and integrated part, the ego-consciousness.

**Limiting belief** – a part of the personal unconscious, associated with the "parental introject". In the terms of Mindell's process-oriented psychology, it is the edge belief.

**Personal unconscious** – a part of the psychological structure (archetype) or pattern of behavior, which was unable to manifest in life and was repressed as it was not accepted by the reference figures at the time. The personal unconscious is complementary to the ego-complex, the two parts together making a whole, "unbroken" archetype. In the language of Mindell's process-oriented psychology, the personal unconscious corresponds to Dreamland.

**Collective unconscious** – a pre-personal or trans-personal dimension manifested in universal patterns of behavior. Structural units of this measurement were called by Jung archetypes. These archetypes coincide, to a certain extent, with what zoologists call patterns of behavior or instincts; so the Jungian archetypes, in a sense, can be called patterns of human behavior. Jung considered the collective unconscious as the basic layer of the psyche, which manifests itself in human life through complexes, i.e. emotionally charged clusters of ideas and mental images, as well as at the level of body sensations and the level of organism chemistry change. In the parlance of Mindell's psychology, this corresponds to the transition from Dreamland to Essence level.

**Self** – a structuring or regulating principle, which allows combining various archetypal contents of the psyche. One of the definitions of the Self is that it represents the totality of the psyche, which manifests itself as a single entity. It can also be said that the Self is the psyche as a whole, which includes both the ego and all the immensity of the unconscious. A third wording is that the Self is the center and circumference of the psyche, which is closely connected to the ancient definition of God as a circle whose center is everywhere and circumference is nowhere...

The ego is the center of the subjective identity (in which the repressed material, autonomous complexes, secondary processes the person is unaware of, interfere with the perception and self-perception) while the Self is the center of the objective identity. In Mindell's terminology, the Self corresponds to the Sentient level.

**Complex** (as cited from Jung's "The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche") «...must be a psychic factor which, in terms of energy, possesses a value that sometimes exceeds that of our conscious intentions, otherwise such disruptions of the conscious order would not be possible

at all. And in fact, an active complex puts us momentarily under a state of duress, of compulsive thinking and acting, for which under certain conditions the only appropriate term would be the judicial concept of diminished responsibility. What then, scientifically speaking, is a "feeling-toned complex"? It is the *image* of a certain psychic situation which is strongly accentuated emotionally and is, moreover, incompatible with the habitual attitude of consciousness. This image has a powerful inner coherence, it has its own wholeness and, in addition, a relatively high degree of autonomy, so that it is subject to the control of the conscious mind to only a limited extent, and therefore behaves like an animated foreign body in the sphere of consciousness. The complex can usually be suppressed with an effort of will, but not argued out of existence, and at the first suitable opportunity it reappears in all its original strength.

Even the soberest formulation of the phenomenology of complexes cannot get round the impressive fact of their autonomy, and the deeper one penetrates into their nature — I might almost say into their biology — the more clearly do they reveal their character as *splinter psyches*. Dream psychology shows us as plainly as could be wished how complexes appear in personified form when there is no inhibiting consciousness to suppress them, exactly like the hobgoblins of folklore who go crashing round the house at night. We observe the same phenomenon in certain psychoses when the complexes get "loud" and appear as "voices" having a thoroughly personal character. Today we can take it as moderately certain that complexes are in fact "splinter psyches." The etymology of their origin is frequently a so-called trauma, an emotional shock or some such thing, that splits off a bit of the psyche. Certainly one of the commonest causes is a moral conflict, which ultimately derives from the apparent impossibility of affirming the whole of one's nature. This impossibility presupposes a direct split, no matter whether the conscious mind is aware of it or not. As a rule there is a marked unconsciousness of any complexes, and this naturally guarantees them all the more freedom of action. In such cases their powers of assimilation become especially pronounced, since unconsciousness helps the complex to assimilate even the ego, the result being a momentary and unconscious alteration of personality known as identification with the complex.

The *via regia* to the unconscious, however, is not the dream, as he thought, but the complex, which is the architect of dreams and of symptoms».

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