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Exploring Jungian Archetypes and the Theory of the Collective Unconscious in J. C. Oates's "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?"

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Abstract

The concepts of archetypes and the collective unconscious are the most recognised among Carl G. Jung's contributions. The collective unconscious is a component of the human psyche distinct from the personal unconscious and not derived from individual experience; therefore, it does not constitute a personal realization. Jung's theory centres on the Collective Unconscious, which he defines as a repository of "racial memories," primal images, and experiential patterns known as archetypes. Jungian literary criticism sharply contrasts with psychoanalytic criticism. Although he initially followed Sigmund Freud, Jung's interpretation of depth psychology diverges significantly from that of his predecessor, creating a fundamental difference between Jungian literary criticism and psychoanalytic criticism. The purpose of this paper is to apply Jung's theory, "Archetypes and The Collective Unconscious," to the characters in J. C. Oates's short story "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?" by analysing the archetypes of persona, anima/animus, shadow, and the self within the story to understand how these archetypes interact to shape the psyche of each character and their psychological behaviours throughout the story.

Keywords:

Collective Unconscious, Personal Unconscious, Archetypes, Persona, Anima/Animus, Shadow, Self, Psychoanalytic Criticism, Psychological Behaviours, Dreams and Visions.

1. Introduction

Joyce Carol Oates is an American writer, best known for her short stories. Her views on contemporary society largely draw on psychological analysis. Oates is an ingenious, prolific writer who has published a wide collection of stories, novels, poems, plays, and criticism (Mancelos 117). "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?" is one of her many stories and can be considered an excellent model of literary work analysed through psychoanalytic theory. Published in 1966, the story later became well known among readers and critics seeking to understand the extraordinary and psychotic behaviours it depicts. The story achieved instant acclaim from enthusiasts and reviewers (Wagner 7).

The story follows rebellious fifteen-year-old Connie, whose mother criticises her for being vain and less sensible than her older sister. June. To disguise her behaviour from her mother, Connie claims she is steadier and more responsible at home. Hot July Sunday BBQ at Connie's aunt. The whole family goes, but Connie stays home. Arnold Friend and Ellie Oscar, two older men, drive up and try to entice her to go for a drive with them. Connie doesn't know

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them, but Arnold looks and sounds familiar. Connie is reluctant to drive with them and suspicious when Arnold reveals he knows her life and friends. Arnold agrees to stay out of the house while Connie talks to him. He threatens that her "people" will be hurt if she does not go with him. He keeps inviting her to show her what love is. Connie agrees to leave the house and drive with Arnold and Ellie after calling someone. Arnold orders her to hang up; and tells her to come out. At his instruction, she rises. It's as if she's watching herself walk toward the door, open it, and step outside toward Arnold. Connie looks out at the wide stretches of land behind him and knows that's where she's going.

1.1. Research Methodology and Text Selection

To apply Jung's theory of "Archetypes and The Collective Unconscious" to Oates's short story "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?", a comparison between the two theorists, Sigmund Freud and Carl G. Jung, is crucial. The comparison should reveal how both theorists divide the human psyche. One of the major points of debate between Jung's and Freud's theories was their views on the unconscious. According to Freudian theory, the human psyche is divided into two major parts: the conscious and the unconscious; the conscious mind includes everything a person is aware of. However, the unconscious mind includes a person's wishes, desires, and memories that influence their behaviour. According to Freud, the id, the ego, and the superego are the three structures that make up the human psyche (Freud 12-18). His theory further claims that the unconscious is the epicentre of our repressed ideas, painful experiences, and basic sexual needs (Kumar 111-112). On the other hand, among C. G. Jung's contributions, the theory of archetypes and the collective unconscious are the most well-known. It comprises twelve essays written between 1936 and 1954, in which Jung elucidates both theoretical and practical dimensions of his developed notion of the archetype (Hobson 66). According to Jung, the human psyche consists of three parts: the ego, which represents our conscious mind; the personal unconscious, which contains memories; and the collective unconscious, which holds the knowledge and experiences that humans are born with (Cain et al. 988). Therefore, it goes beyond all cultural barriers of human existence and unifies all human beings. Also, the collective unconscious is represented by archetypes, which, according to Jungian theory, are universal, fundamental symbols and images that originate in the collective unconscious (Mundhra and Agarwal 527). Archetypes can appear in dreams and have universal implications across cultures (Hobson 66). These kinds of symbolic elements, as seen in dreams or through transference, can be traced back to universal human experiences (Boechat 3). He also argues that symbols from many cultures are often similar because they originate from archetypes common to all humans and part of our collective unconscious (Jung 4). Jung considers individuation a process that a person goes through to become a complete individual by uniting the unconscious and the conscious. This paper aims to utilise Jung's theory of "Archetypes and The Collective Unconscious" to examine the characters in J. C. Oates's short story "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?" by analysing the archetypes of persona, anima/animus, shadow, and self to comprehend their interactions and influence on the characters' psyches and psychological behaviours.

1.2. Research Structure

The research is structured around three key parts following the introduction. Section Two is a historical review of the psychological fiction and the evolution of the genre from the inception to the present-day literary works. It also discusses the link between literary criticism and psychoanalytic criticism, pointing out the main distinctions and ways of interpretation between them. Section Three consists of four subsections that analyse the unique Jungian

archetype and its importance in the story. The first portion analyses the characters in the story for the existence of the Persona archetype. The second is a study of the Shadow archetype, especially as it appears in dreams and visions. The third deals with the Anima and Animus archetypes, focusing on the characters' interior struggles. The fourth portion is devoted to the archetype of the Self, the culminating point of the individuation process, which unites the conscious and the unconscious parts of the psyche. The conclusion of the research discusses the importance of psychological fiction in modern literature, outlines its main findings, and differentiates between literary and psychoanalytic criticism.

2. Historical Background

Psychological fiction is about the inner lives of characters – their thoughts, feelings, memories, desires, conflicts and unconscious drives. Psychological fiction is not the same as novels, which are mainly concerned with external events and physical actions. Psychological fiction is concerned with the way people see, understand and respond to their situations. What sets psychological fiction apart, Athena Vrettos says, is its focus on the inner lives and thought processes of its characters (Vrettos 9). The birth of psychological fiction as a significant narrative genre is closely connected with the English novel of the seventeenth century. Samuel Richardson's Pamela (1740) and Clarissa (1747–48) provide an important contribution to the study of personal consciousness via communication, contemplation, and emotional conflict. There is, as Chris Baldick argues, a significant heritage of the psychological novel in English, stretching back to the works of Richardson in the 1740s. George Eliot created the word in 1855. In the nineteenth century, authors like Jane Austen, George Eliot, Stendhal and Fyodor Dostoevsky advanced the art of psychological fiction (Baldick 190). Their articles explored the link of moral obligation and social expectation and emotional experience and personal identity. For example, Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* (1866) deals with guilt, alienation and moral conflict in the tortured conscience of Raskolnikov. George Eliot's work also scrutinises the conflict between societal obligation and personal desire and demonstrates how psychological intricacies may illuminate wider ethical and social dilemmas.

Psychological fiction underwent a change in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Writers became increasingly interested in the complexities and ambiguities of consciousness. The advent of contemporary psychology brought psychoanalysis and philosophical ideas, which authors wanted to examine mental states that were not easily conveyed in traditional chronological tales. Authors like Joseph Conrad and Henry James emphasised the subjective perspective of their characters and concentrated on awareness and interpretation at the heart of the framing of their stories (Baldick 192). This development reached a particularly significant stage in literary modernism when writers played with stream of consciousness, internal monologue, fractured narrative and temporal changes. James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922) and Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* (1925) show how connections, memories and sentiments influence the narrative experience. Robert Humphrey said that stream of consciousness writing attempts to express the levels of mental activity that show the psychological life of characters (Humphrey 6-8). Therefore, these experimental methods, which moved the focus from external events to the continual, often disconnected flow of consciousness, extended the possibilities of fiction.

In the mid-20th century, psychological fiction continued to evolve, exploring themes such as existentialism, trauma, alienation, and the influence of historical events on individual

identity. The authors researched psychological pain based on the events of war, societal transformation and political struggle, and the difficulties faced by individuals in understanding themselves and each other. Later decades of postmodern and current literature made the depiction of consciousness much more complex with fragmented memories, unreliable narrators, nonlinear storytelling, and other various points of view. They undermine the idea of a fixed identity, or a single way of comprehending human drive. Connections between modern psychological fiction and genres like psychological thrillers, historical fiction, and speculative fiction show the flexibility of psychological research to narrative forms. These developments reveal the continuing relationship between literary creativity and changing ideas about the human mind.

Psychological fiction continues to be an important instrument for writers to explore themes such as memory, trauma, societal pressure, personal identity and the relationship between a person's consciousness and their surroundings. Much contemporary writing mixes psychological description with such themes as gender, class, cultural identity, and political instability (Humphrey 13). These elements have resulted in psychological fiction moving from the depiction of individual sensation to the depiction of the effects of larger social and historical forces on the person. Its historical growth has been a gradual movement away from the depiction of human emotions and ethical dilemmas to increasingly complex representations of consciousness, subjectivity and identity. Psychological fiction continues to be a prominent literary genre, as it permits authors to investigate the complex nature of the human experience and encourages readers to reconsider the reasons, convictions, and contradictions that define individual behaviour.

3. Textual Analysis:

3.1. The Persona as a Mask of Identity

The persona archetype represents the conscious mind. It is the way people present themselves to the world. It is a mask, a social face an individual wears to conceal one side of their personality and reveal the other to society. As Jung states, "The face we never show to the world because we cover it with the persona, the mask of the actor. But the mirror lies behind the mask and shows the true." (Jung 20). The persona is a part of the human consciousness; it is the conscious side of a person's psyche. In Oates's story, the persona archetype can be shown in both the characters of Connie and Arnold Friend. Connie completely rejects her role as a daughter or a sister, and she has a hidden persona that is not shown to her mother or sister. That hidden persona of Connie is the sexual persona that is revealed while she is away from her family. Outside her home, she is always a different person; at home, she argues with her family. As the narrator of the story describes that, "she looked one way when she was at home and another way when she was away from home" (Oates 1). She does this behaviour mainly because she is a teenager. She pays more attention to her physical appearance, flirts with boys, and wears the mask of her sexual persona, which is very different from the one she presents at home: quiet and unhappy. "Everything about her had two sides, one for home and one for somewhere that wasn't home" (Oates 1). As a teenager, Connie is transitioning from childhood to adulthood, which explains her dual personality. By presenting a different persona to the outside world, she feels stronger. Through doing so, she desperately attempts to fill the voids in her personality at home. Connie changes her persona to show her sexual side so that boys can be attracted to her. Her walk, dress, and laugh draw their attention: "walking around the shopping plaza in their shorts and flat ballerina slippers that always scuffed the sidewalk, with

charm bracelets jingling on their thin wrists" (Oates 1). Connie goes to extreme lengths to demonstrate her maturity through her chosen relationships, yet she remains confused between her true personality and the mask she wears. While she sincerely wishes to be considered a valuable woman by men, she panics when Arnold is very attentive to her, showing that the sexual mask she wears makes her appear to be a mature woman, which she is not. Her sexual mask eventually drops, and her fear makes her realise that she is still a child and not a mature woman. The mask she wears outside her home is not her true personality. It is what she pretends to be as an adult and not as a child. In the end, she realises she still has time to become a mature woman and that the way she presents herself to others puts her life in danger. She becomes an easy target for Arnold Friend, who tries to seduce her. This encounter helps her understand that she is not as mature as she believes. Connie's personality is torn by an inner conflict that makes her forget who she really is: a child or an adult, a young girl or a mature woman. Each persona she wears confuses her mind.

Arnold Friend, on the other hand, changes his personality throughout the story. Arnold makes a spectacular and fashionable appearance at Connie's house. He is dressed in tight jeans, scuffed boots, and a white shirt that shows off his arm muscles. Connie is attracted to his looks, and he makes a strong first impression of her as she tries to figure out who he is and why he looks the way he does. With a seductive look, Arnold tries to seduce Connie. Moreover, he pretends to be younger to attract her attention. When she asks him of his age, he replies that he is almost her age: "That's a crazy thing to ask. Can'tcha see I'm your own age?" (Oates 5). In fact, he is older than he pretends. Arnold tries to get close to Connie by pretending to be a young man, but when he takes off his glasses, Connie sees his true face and realises he is not young at all. In fact, Arnold wears sunglasses to hide his physiognomy because they make him look younger. When Connie refuses to go on a field trip with him, he suddenly changes, becoming a completely different person: "Connie, don't fool around with me. I mean—I mean, don't fool around" (Oates 6). He becomes a dangerous person and starts threatening her. When Connie asks him what he wants from her, he replies, "Just two things, or maybe three" (Oates 8), implying he's simply trying to take advantage of her. These words and actions reveal Arnold's true face. He transforms from a kind person who attempts to seduce her with a few flattering words into a criminal by shedding the mask of a charming man and adopting the persona of an evil individual. By dropping one mask and wearing another, Arnold Friend hides his true self. The mask Arnold wears, pretending to be someone else, hides his dark personality and helps him achieve his devious goals.

Both Connie and Arnold Friend show a different face from what they actually are. The social face they wear in front of others is a mask that does not reflect who they truly are. It is the mask behind which they hide their true personalities. Their persona changes depending on the place and situation because each place demands a different mask. They do this because the people they interact with require a different mask. Even when they are interacting with the same person, they still change their masks, as Arnold Friend does when he alters his mask in front of Connie. At the beginning, when he tries to seduce her, but Connie does not give in, he changes his mask and becomes another person with an evil face. This means that the same person they are in contact with can change the mask, depending on how the situation evolves. These masks constantly change as the story progresses, as shown when Connie and Arnold Friend shift from one persona to another each time they change their masks. This story shows that each of them has more than one face; each character's persona plays a different role in shaping their behaviour. Their ability to change personas comes from the fact that the persona is on the

conscious side of their psyche, under their control. The masks they present to others come from the conscious behaviours they want to display. Both Connie and Arnold Friend are fully aware of this process of change in their personalities, as it stems from their consciousness.

3.2. Dreams and Visions and the Boundaries of Reality

Arnold Friend could also be seen as a dream or a vision that appears to Connie. As Jung explains in his theory, archetypes can be shown in dreams and visions: "the archetypes appear as active personalities in dreams and fantasies" (Jung 38). Jung believes that insight into the nature of the collective unconscious could be gained primarily through dreams and active imagination, a wakeful exploration of the imagination. Dreams might express personal as well as universal or collective contents (James 1). The shadow archetype is one of the steps in the process of individuation that represents the unconscious of the human psyche and may appear in dreams and visions in numerous forms. It might appear as a demon, a monster, a witch, or any other supernatural figure. It is described as the darker side of the psyche, representing chaos, wildness, and the unknown (Bolea 90). The shadow's appearance in dreams depends on the individual's experience because much of it develops in the individual's mind rather than being inherited from the collective unconscious.

The blurred line between imagination and reality is further unsettled by the presence of Arnold Friend. His entrance into Connie's life is bizarre, filled with hidden codes, and seemingly supernatural abilities. He may be a shadow in Connie's unconscious state represented in her dream. From the beginning of the story, it is clear that what happens to Connie is a dream, not reality. Her dream starts when she is "dreaming about the boys she met" (Oates 2). One of the boys Connie meets that night is Arnold Friend, but there is no sign he is real; he may be a vision or a dream. All of Connie's thoughts about that night could be considered a dream from the very beginning.

Furthermore, Arnold's supernatural abilities suggest he is not a real person. He knows everything about her: "I took a special interest in you, such a pretty girl, and found out all about you" (Oates 4). He knows where her family is, what they are doing at that moment, what Connie is thinking about, and how unhappy she is with her family because he can read her mind: "I know my Connie" (Oates 4). His ability to change his voice from a simple, nice one to the voice of the man on the radio Connie is listening to also suggests he is probably an imaginary character, not an ordinary man.

Connie's dream represents both the personal unconscious and the collective unconscious. It represents her personal experience and what she faces as a teenager, inside and outside her home. It represents the dark side of her unconscious psyche. In other words, it is the dark side of Connie's personality, outside her consciousness and absent from her reality, that she refuses to acknowledge. "The shadow personifies everything that the subject refuses to acknowledge about himself" (Jung 284). Connie's dreams become part of her unconscious mind, and in them, the personal and collective unconscious are shaped by a demon represented by the character of Arnold Friend.

3.3. Anima, Animus, and Inner Duality

Another step in the individuation procedure is the integration of the anima and animus, the opposite sex attributes in each individual. As Jung states, "A man therefore has in him a feminine side, an unconscious feminine figure—a fact of which he is generally quite unaware. I may take it as known that I have called this figure the "anima," and its counterpart in a woman

the "animus"" (Jung 284). The male psyche has an unconscious feminine side or character called anima, while the female psyche has an unconscious masculine side or character called animus. The anima and animus archetypes are the opposite of the 'persona archetype'. The persona is the mask of the same sex, while the anima and animus represent the opposite sex. The archetypes of anima and animus can also be found in both characters, Connie and Arnold Friend.

From the beginning of the story, Connie shows her animus and masculine qualities. She wants to live her own life, and as a 15-year-old girl, her animus grows, guiding her from childhood into adulthood. She is not close to her mother or older sister, June, and is unhappy at home, while she behaves differently with boys and feels closer to them than to her family. She even acts like boys; for example, she does not clean her room as girls are usually expected to, as her mother says, "Why don't you keep your room clean like your sister?" (Oates 1). Connie demonstrates her independence and her resistance to being manipulated by others. She listens to none of what her mother says to her. She is usually shown as a strong and bold child who fears nothing. She goes out with her friends at night, speaks and eats with the guys, and is not scared of the dark or of strangers. These are dictated by her animus, her male side. She is not frightened to go out at night with a male, and when Eddie asks her to go out to eat with him, she agrees without considering that she believes she is courageous enough to defend herself. When she goes out at night with Eddie, a stranger is staring at her, and she ignores him; even when he says, "Gonna get you, baby" (Oates 1), she keeps walking away fearlessly.

Another incident occurs when Connie refuses to go with her family to her aunt's house, choosing instead to stay home alone, similar to how boys avoid a family reunion. While she is home alone, two boys appear at her door. She does not panic when they show up, nor does she show signs of fear. Instead, she pretends to be brave. Arnold Friend also acknowledges her strength and that she is not an effortless target to seduce, saying, "you re a brave, sweet little girl" (Oates 9). Although she has fear inside of her, she does not show it to him. This bravery comes from her animus, her unconscious masculine side. But even though Connie has masculine traits from her unconscious mind, she knows she is a girl and cannot change that reality. So, when she faces real danger, her feminine side emerges from her unconscious. That is what happens at the end, when she realises that Arnold Friend is truly dangerous.

On the other hand, Arnold Friend shows his anima through his relationship with Connie. He appears to her as a romantic person who wants to take care of her and love her. He is kind and gentle in his conversations with her, and Connie even begins to question whether he is genuinely nice: "She couldn't decide if she liked him or if he was just a jerk" (Oates 3). Even when he talks to her, his voice pretends to be soft: "He spoke in a simple, lilting voice" (Oates 4). When Connie tells him he is a stranger, he starts to cry. All this anima that Arnold shows only comes out when he is close to Connie. Arnold anima also rises from his unconscious mind. The anima represents the unconscious feminine psychological behaviours that Arnold exhibits. His feminine side emerges when he is with Connie, but when he interacts with Ellie Oscar, he raises his voice at him. He shows kindness and sympathy to Connie but later changes when she does not show enough interest.

Both Connie and Arnold Friend reveal the unconscious aspects of their psyches to the opposite sex through their respective anima and animus archetypes. Connie, with her masculine behaviour towards Arnold, shows that she has a complete understanding of men and what they

like and how they think and behave; therefore, she acts with him neatly and bravely. The same goes for Arnold; his feminine behaviour helps him get closer to Connie. His kindness and love attract her, as he shows her that he understands how women think and feel. The unconscious side of their psyches works by showing the opposite sex attributes in each individual, represented by the anima and animus archetypes. In a more positive view, the animus, like the anima, plays an important role in individuation. Ultimately, Connie's animus, like Arnold Friend's anima, links their personal unconscious to the collective unconscious.

3.4. The Self as The Integration of Conscious and Unconscious

The process of individuation, in which the components of the personality are brought together, serves to create the self. Bringing these conflicts into consciousness and resolving them is necessary for individuation. By uniting the unconscious with the conscious, the human psyche achieves wholeness. "I have called this wholeness that transcends consciousness the 'self' The goal of the individuation process is the synthesis of the self" (Jung 164). It is the process of blending numerous aspects of a person's personality in which the self becomes the centre of the entire personality. Connie's personality reflects this process as she moves from childhood to maturity. She seeks a complete understanding of her existence through the mental conflict between the conscious and the unconscious to achieve wholeness. She sees the future as a window to wholeness where she might find herself. Therefore, Connie sees Arnold Friend as a saviour and the only key to her future. He will guide her from childhood to adulthood, helping her become a mature woman who strives for independence and freedom.

Although Arnold Friend may be a dream or vision in Connie's psyche, he is the only one who awakens her consciousness and pushes her toward wholeness. Without the appearance of Arnold, she would not have reached this transitional point in her life. When she realises the danger Arnold poses, she begins to understand right from wrong. He makes her think and see life from a different angle. All the conflicts Connie has with herself and with others inside and outside her home are results of her psyche's struggle between conscious and unconscious. At the end, the personas representing her conscious side and her animus, which represents her unconscious, unite in the self. When she understands her true personality, the unconscious and conscious parts of her psyche unite in the self, and she achieves wholeness.

4. Conclusion

The final component is the self, which integrates the conscious and unconscious parts of a person through the process. The self is the integration of the conscious and unconscious elements of who Connie is. The unconscious is a very essential element of our human experience, and dreams are one of our most crucial portals into our awareness. The aim of this research is to illuminate the role of the unconscious in Connie's life and to reveal the secrets that her unconscious mind holds from her conscious awareness. Connie's dreams are personified as Arnold Friend, which makes her more conscious of her surroundings. In the short story "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?" by Joyce Carol Oates, the interaction between Connie and Arnold Friend reveals how the characters of Connie and Arnold Friend are constructed with the assistance of the conscious and unconscious processes of their brains. Therefore, the study implies that every archetype is part of a person's psyche, which proves Jung's idea of "Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious". The story can be considered an excellent model of literary work analysed through psychoanalytic theory. As well as, it outlines the importance of psychological fiction in modern literature and helps to differentiates between literary criticism and psychoanalytic criticism.

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